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(54) Title: TRANSDERMAL ESTROGEN/PROGESTIN DOSAGE UNIT, SYSTEM AND PROCESS

(57) Abstract

Transdermal estrogen/progestin absorption dosage units have been developed which comprise a backing layer, an adjoining polymer layer is an adhesive layer in which at least minimum effective dose of an estrogen is dissolved or microdispersed. Adhered to the polymer layer is an adhesive layer in which is dissolved and/or microdispersed at least minimum doses of progestin. Presently preferred is use of the natural estrogen, 17-*beta*-estradiol, or ethinyl estradiol or combinations thereof and of the progestin. The units have biologically acceptable adhesive and polymer layers. The adhesive layer can have dispersed one or more skin permeation enhancing agents. A separating layer can optionally be used in making the dosage units, which separate the adhesive and polymer layers, which permits estrogen transmission from the polymer layer during treatment. Dosage units are provided which transdermally deliver at least minimum daily doses of the estrogen and progestin for multiple days, such as for one week. The invention also provides a process of fertility control and estrogen replacement therapy using the novel dosage units. Also, the invention provides a fertility control system for fertility control using the novel dosage units.

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TRANSDERMAL ESTROGEN/PROGESTIN DOSAGE UNIT,
SYSTEM AND PROCESS

10

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. application Ser. No. 131,462, filed December 16, 1987, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. application Ser. No. 947,130, filed December 29, 1986.

20

TECHNICAL FIELD

This invention relates to a novel transdermal fertility control system and a process for controlling fertility. The system involves transdermal estrogen/progestin absorption dosage units adapted for adhesion to the female subject desiring fertility control or prevention of an unwanted pregnancy. Additionally, the invention relates to a method of controlling fertility by utilizing a transdermal system of applying a series of transdermal estrogen/progestin dosage units having a polymer layer adhered to a backing layer, an adhesive layer, said polymer and adhesive layer having dissolved and/or microdispersed therein estrogen and progestin, respectively, in effective dosage amounts, said polymer and adhesive layers separated by a permselective layer. A biocompatible, effective progestin is selected for use in the dosage units. Preferably, the estrogen used is beta-estradiol, ethinyl estradiol or biocompatible derivatives thereof which have estrogenic activity, preferably

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5 which are bioconvertible to the estrogen used in the dosage
unit. The dosage units can also be used in estrogenic
10 replacement therapy.

BACKGROUND ART

Estrogenic therapies include two main areas, fertility control and estrogenic replacement.

20 Fertility has been controlled by use of a number of
orally administered hormone products. The products are
25 ordinarily a combination of an estrogen and a progestin. A
synthetic estrogen is ordinarily used as the estrogen compo-
30 nent since the natural estrogen, 17-beta-estradiol, is al-
most completely destroyed, usually by over 90 percent, when
taken orally. It is destroyed to a degree in the digestive
35 tract before it is absorbed but primarily the destructive
metabolism of 17-beta-estradiol occurs during the hepatic
first-pass metabolism. Since such a large amount is
40 destroyed, in order to provide an effective dosage orally, a
large excess must be administered with uncertain effective-
45 ness and a large amount of unwanted metabolic products.
Therefore, a synthetic estrogen such as ethinyl estradiol
50 normally is orally administered with less than desired re-
sults.

55 The progestin component generally inhibits, as intended, ovulation. Also, in the case of orally administered progestin, a substantial amount of metabolic breakdown

5

occurs causing undesired metabolic products with undesired effects.

10

Therefore, in the oral administration of what is commonly referred to as the pill or other orally administered products, considerably overdosing is necessary to obtain a high degree of assurance that the desired fertility control will be obtained.

20

A number of major side effects have reportedly been associated with the administration of oral fertility control preparations, such as thrombophlebitis and thrombosis, pulmonary embolism, coronary thrombosis, myocardial infarction, cerebral thrombosis, cerebral hemorrhage and hypertension.

30

These side effects have been attributed to the estrogen component in the oral preparations. Use of the progestin-only preparations (mini-pill) has been found to eliminate the side effects of estrogen. However, the fertility control is less than that of the combined preparations and the menstrual cycle also becomes more irregular. It has been reported that less incidence of irregular bleeding is observed if the progestin is administered at a more constant rate of delivery. Besides the side effects, the oral fertility control preparations also have the disadvantage of fertility control efficacy depending highly on the degree of patient compliance. The risk of pregnancy is known to increase with each pill missed.

55

An ideal and patient-acceptable fertility control system should provide the following advantages: minimized side

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effect, increased ease of administration, rapid termination of treatment, if needed, and improved patient compliance. 10 In recent years, considerable attention has already been directed to the development of implantable, intrauterine, 15 intracervical or intravaginal fertility control delivery systems to provide a prolonged and controlled administration of steroid hormones to the body for achieving fertility 20 control; however, none of the delivery systems developed so far can be considered as ideal and side effect-free.

25

Other fertility control means have been used, such as topical creams and intravaginal devices, which deliver combinations of one or more progestins and one or more 30 estrogens, including the naturally-occurring estrogen, 17-beta-estradiol. However, the undesirable aspects of such 35 fertility control systems are evident.

40

It is, therefore, highly desired that transdermal systems be provided which permit 1) use of the natural estrogen, 17-beta-estradiol, if desired, 2) use of a minimum number of dosage units for each menstrual cycle, such as use of 45 three successive weekly dosage units, and 3) adherence to the skin of the subject which would administer sufficiently high levels of estrogen and progestin hormones to provide 50 high assurance of fertility control without a high amount of undesired metabolic or chemical degradative products. Development of a rate-control transdermal drug delivery system, 55 which is capable of minimizing any individual variability

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5 and regional differences in skin permeability, is a necessity to attain a predictable blood level of a drug. The
10 transdermal rate-control drug administration is known to offer several potential advantages for systemic medication:
15 (i) avoidance of the risk and inconvenience of intravenous therapy and of the variability in absorption and metabolism associated with oral therapy; (ii) continuity of drug administration, permitting the use of a pharmacologically-active agent with short biological half-life; (iii) efficacy can be
20 achieved with lower total daily dosage of drug, because of reduced hepatic first-pass metabolism and continuous drug input; (iv) less chance of over- or under-dosing, as a
25 result of prolonged, programmed delivery of drug at required therapeutic rate; (v) provision of a simplified medication regimen; and (vi) ability to rapidly terminate the drug
30 infusion, if needed, by removal of the drug delivery system from skin surface. Therefore, a transdermal contraceptive
35 delivery system, which is capable of providing on a fast effective basis dual-delivery of an estrogen and a progestin
40 at controlled rates for a specific duration would be an ideal system for achieving fertility regulation in women.
45

50 The second main area of estrogenic therapy concerns the need for estradiol replacement therapy. It is caused by
55 menopause (the cessation of ovarian function), oophorectomy (loss of one or both ovaries by surgery) or by pituitary failure. Replacement estrogenic therapy is an important need. Besides the need to alleviate the menopausal symptoms

5

caused by estrogenic steroid deficiency, there are additional contributions of such replacement estrogenic therapy associated with osteoporosis (loss of bone mass) and atherosclerosis. It has been found advantageous to administer also an amount of progestin as a part of such estrogenic replacement therapy. There is clearly a need for improvements in means and methods for estrogenic steroid therapy. Even though it has been found that estradiol itself or estradiol in the form of certain derivatives such as mono- or diesters (e.g., acetate esters) can be absorbed transdermally, it is desired that improved transdermal estradiol and other estrogenic steroid absorption dosage unit forms and processes of transdermal administration be developed.

35

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

40

Provided by this invention is a transdermal fertility control absorption system which permits fertility control by using sequentially three transdermal dosage units which can easily be applied to a selected skin area.

45 50

The first dosage unit ordinarily is applied on the fifth day of a menstrual cycle. The dosage unit is replaced by the second dosage unit after 7 days and the second is replaced by a third dosage unit at the end of another 7 days. The third dosage unit is removed at the end of 7 days, which preferably can be replaced by a fourth placebo dosage unit. Then, at the beginning of the next menstrual

5 cycle, another sequential course of 3 fertility control
dosage units and the fourth placebo dosage unit is again
10 used, which course is repeated again and again as long as
desired.

15 The transdermal estrogen/progestin dosage units of this
invention comprise:

- a) a backing layer which is substantially impervious
20 to the estrogen and progestin hormones to be
delivered transdermally and which optionally is
25 breathable, especially if the dosage unit is used
on a long-term basis, such as for several days;
- b) a polymer layer which is in contact with said
30 backing layer and which has dissolved and/or
microdispersed therein an effective amount of an
35 estrogen, preferably 17-beta-estradiol, ethinyl
estradiol, or a biocompatible derivative thereof
40 which has estrogenic activity, preferably those
derivatives which are bioconvertible to said
estradiols, or a combination thereof, said polymer
45 layer providing a dosage amount of the estrogen to
be delivered transdermally; and
- c) an adhesive layer which can adhere the dosage unit
50 in intimate contact with the skin of the subject
being treated to permit the hormones to be
55 absorbed transdermally, said adhesive layer being
adhered to the polymer layer and having dissolved

5 and/or microdispersed therein an effective dosage
amount of a progestin, selected from the group
10 consisting of norgestrel, levonorgestrel, biocom-
patible derivatives of norgestrel or levonorges-
15 trell which have progestin activity, preferably
biocompatible derivatives which are bioconvertible
20 to norgestrel or levonorgestrel, said adhesive
layer being biocompatible and permitting said
progestin and said estrogen to be transmitted for
25 transdermal absorption, said adhesive layer having
an effective amount of a skin absorption enhancing
agent.

30 Optionally, another layer can be included in the dosage
units between the polymer layer (b) which has present an
35 estrogen and the adhesive layer (c) which has present a
progestin. In this separating layer, it is preferable to
40 have present little or no estrogen or progestin. The
separating layer can be made of selected polymers, for
example, a bioacceptable polyisobutylene which permits the
45 estrogen in layer (b) to be transmitted for transdermal
absorption. Additionally, it is presently preferred that
50 the separating layer be free of any substantial amount of
skin absorption enhancing agent.

The estrogen dissolved or microdispersed in the polymer
55 layer (b) comprises an amount of 17-beta-estradiol, ethinyl
estradiol, biocompatible derivatives thereof which have

15 The progestin is dissolved or microdispersed in the
adhesive layer comprises an amount which will provide the
20 role of progestin in the desired fertility control system or
in hormone replacement. The progestin is selected as
defined above. Additionally, the adhesive layer has distri-
25 buted therein an effective amount of transdermal absorption
enhancing agent.

30 Preferably, the adhesive layer is divided into two
adhesive layers. The first layer (c) has the progestin
35 component above defined dissolved and/or microdispersed
therein. The adhesive composition used to make the first
adhesive layer has enhancing agent distributed therein. The
40 second adhesive layer is adhered to the first adhesive
layer. It also has distributed therein an effective amount
of a transdermal absorption enhancing agent.

45 Desirably, the surface of the adhesive layer making
contact with the subject being treated has a sufficiently
50 low concentration of transdermal skin permeation enhancing
agent and other components to permit good adhesion of the
dosage unit to subject treated. The adhesive layer making
55 contact with the skin of the subject can be made in a manner
that surface thereof has a lower enhancing agent content to

5

provide better adhesion to the subject.

10 Suitably, the dosage units will provide the desired rate of transdermal absorption of the estrogen and progestin components for a period of several days, preferably for one week. Use of week-long transdermal dosage units minimize 15 the possibility of missed administration of a dosage in fertility control.

20

25 The backing layer is made from materials that are substantially impermeable with regard to the hormones of the transdermal dosage unit. It can be made of polymers such as 30 polyethylene, polypropylene, polyurethane, polyvinyl-chloride, polyesters such as poly(ethylene phthalate), and foils such as laminates of polymer films with metallic foils 35 such as aluminum foil. If the dosage units are used on a long term basis, such as for a multiple of days, the backing can have a microporosity to permit passage of sweat and air 40 to minimize any skin hydration.

40

45 The polymer disc layer is suitably fabricated from biologically acceptable lipophilic or hydrophilic polymers, which will permit the estrogen to be transmitted for trans-50 dermal absorption and which provide compatibility and stability for the estrogen. The polymer layer which has the estrogen distributed therein can preferably be made of a suitable polymeric adhesive, such as a suitable polyacrylic 55 or a silicone adhesive in which the estrogen is stable and microdispersible or soluble. The polymer layer can also be

5 made using a polymer, such as silicone medical grade elasto-
mers, to fabricate a disc in which the estrogen is microdis-
persed. The polymer-estrogen mixture is then formed into a
10 layer of an appropriate thickness and suitable surface area
and is cured, if desired. The polymer disc layer is then
15 adhered to the backing layer. Care must be taken that the
polymer selected is compatible with the pharmaceutical,
20 permits its release for transdermal absorption and is free
or sufficiently free from any biologically unacceptable
components.

25 Other estrogenic steroid hormones can be used in par-
tial or complete replacement of 17-beta-estradiol or ethinyl
30 estradiol, for example, biocompatible derivatives thereof,
e.g., an ester of 17-beta estradiol which is biologically
35 compatible and can be effectively absorbed transdermally and
at a rate compatible with the desired rate of absorption of
40 progestin. Also, it is ordinarily desired that such esters
are bioconvertible by components of the skin or other por-
tions of the body, such as hydrolytical enzymes (e.g.,
45 esterase), to 17-beta-estradiol. If the derivative is an
ester, the derivative can be selected from mono- or di-
50 esters since estradiol has hydroxy groups at the 3- and 17-
positions, the 3-mono and 17-mono as well as the 3,17-di-
55 esters can be made by generally known esterification
methods. Some ester derivatives will be absorbed more
readily than the basic 17-beta-estradiol. In selection of
ester derivatives, it is ordinarily preferred that the main

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20 Regarding the daily dosages of progestin for fertility
control in humans, about 20 to about 1000 mcg, preferably
about 50 to about 250 mcg/day if the progestin used is
25 levonorgestrel, are suitable. Regarding estrogen, about 25
to about 100 mcg/day of estrogen based on 17-beta-estradiol
30 are presently believed suitable daily doses for achieving
fertility control in humans.

Finally, the adhesive layer of the dosage unit is assembled with the other layer elements to form the dosage unit. The adhesive layer selected can vary depending on many factors including economic factors such as the type of manufacturing equipment most readily available, the rapidity of absorption desired or other factors. For example, the adhesive layer can be applied directly to the polymer layer. A skin permeation enhancer compound can be incorporated thoroughly in the adhesive polymer which is suitable for adhesion to the skin locus to which the transdermal dosage unit will be applied. The progestin used is also dissolved or microdispersed in the adhesive layer. The adhesive layer can be applied to the polymer layer by coating or by solvent

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5 casting and/or laminating. The concentration of skin permeation enhancing agent, if employed, can be reduced in the portion of the adhesive layer means coming in contact with the subject to be treated, especially if less than desired adhesion is realized in the adhesive layer, by applying the 10 surface portion of the adhesive layer separately, wherein the adhesive composition has a lower concentration of skin 15 permeation enhancing agent or progestin or both. The adhesive layer is desirably thin in the micron-range thickness, suitably 5-250 microns in thickness, desirably about 20 20 to 200 microns, and preferably about 20 to 150 microns in thickness. Also, if desired, an additional adhesive means 25 can be used in the form of a ring or an overlay adhered to the backing layer which extends beyond the circumference of 30 the polymer layer.

35 The optional separating layer if employed is applied to the polymer layer prior to the assembly of the adhesive 40 layer (c) having present progestin. Alternatively, the separating layer can be applied to the surface of the adhesive layer prior to its assembly into the dosage unit. The 45 separating layer is made of a suitable polyisobutylene.

50 The absorption rate of one or both of the hormones of the transdermal hormone absorption dosage units of the invention can be increased, such as by having an Enhancing Factor of at least 1.2, preferably at least 1.3, and more 55 preferably at least about 1.5 or 2.0. Enhancing Factor is defined as the ratio of normalized permeation rate [in

5

mcg/cm²/hr] of a dosage unit of this invention with skin permeation enhancer in the adhesive layer/the normalized permeation rate of a corresponding dosage unit without enhancer in the adhesive layer.

10 The invention also is a process for administering said hormones transdermally by forming hormone-containing dosage units having a polymer layer which has the estrogen dosage dissolved or microdispersed therein, to which polymer layer is adhered a backing layer, said dosage unit having assembled therewith an adhesive layer which transports the estrogen and progestin and contains the progestin and transdermal absorption enhancing agent; applying the dosage unit in intimate contact with the skin of the subject treated; and administering the hormones transdermally to said subject 20 to achieve fertility control or estrogen replacement.

25 Additionally, provided by this invention is a novel 30 fertility control absorption system in which a series of three dosage units are provided to be applied in treatment for three successive weeks as described above, in which the 35 first, second and third week dosage units provide differing 40 progestin/estrogen skin permeation dosage rate ratios.

45 The first dosage unit applied ordinarily on the fifth 50 day of the menstrual cycle delivers about equal dosage amounts of progestin and estrogen, based on levonorgestrel 55 equivalence in the case of progestin and 17-beta-estradiol equivalence in the case of estrogen. In the first dosage

5 unit as well as in the second and third dosage units, sufficient 17-beta-estradiol will suitably be incorporated
10 to deliver transdermally an effective amount in the range of from about 30 to about 100 mcg per day, desirably about 50 mcg per day.

15 The dosage unit for the second treatment week delivers about a 50 percent increase in the relative amount of progestin, i.e., a progestin/estrogen dosage rate ratio of about 1.5:1.0, suitably a rate ratio of from about 1.25:1.0 to about 1.75:1.0, based on the same progestin and estrogen equivalence expressed above regarding the first week dosage unit.

30 The dosage unit for the third treatment week delivers about a 150 percent increase in the relative amount of progestin as compared to the dosage unit for first week or a dosage rate ratio of about 2.5:1.0, suitably a rate ratio of about 2.0:1.0 to about 3.0:1.0, based on the same equivalence expressed above regarding the first week dosage unit. It will be understood by those skilled in the art that the ratio can be adjusted depending upon a number of factors, for example, the ratio can be varied to an effective range in the dosage rate ratio range of about 0.5:1 to about 5:1, based on the same progestin and estrogen equivalence factors expressed above regarding the first week dosage unit.

5

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

10 FIG. 1 is a cross section of a dosage unit of the invention having six layers including two separated drug reservoir layers having estrogen (layer showing drug presence using dots) and progestin (layer showing drug presence as flattened ovals), respectively.

15

20 FIG. 2 is a cross section of a dosage unit of the invention having five layers: (1) release layer, (2) levonorgestrel/enhancer layer, (3) Oppanol B80, (4) estradiol in acrylic adhesive and (5) backing layer.

25

30 FIG. 3 is a graph showing effect of varying the thickness of the layer separating the progestin- and estrogen-containing layers on the respective skin permeation rates across young female cadaver skin.

35 FIG. 4 is a graph showing the effect of diffusional resistance ($10^4/KD$) of the layer separating the progestin (levonorgestrel)- and estrogen (estradiol)-containing layers on the respective skin permeation rates.

40

45 FIG. 5 is a graph showing the effect of the thickness of the layer separating the progestin (levonorgestrel)- and estrogen (estradiol)-containing layers on the drug absorption permeation rate ratios thereof.

50 FIG. 6 is a graph showing the effect of storage at specified temperatures for specific duration on the skin permeation rates of contained progestin (levonorgestrel) from the dosage units.

55

5

10 FIG. 7 is a graph showing the effect of storage at specified temperatures for specific duration on the skin permeation rates of estrogen (estradiol) from the dosage units.

15 FIG. 8 is a graph showing the effect of storage at specified temperatures for specific duration on chemical stability of progestin (levonorgestrel) in the dosage units.

20 FIG. 9 is a graph showing the effect of storage at specified temperatures for specific duration on the chemical stability of contained estrogen (estradiol) from the dosage units.

25 FIG. 10 is a graph showing the effect of the loading dose of estradiol in the dosage units on the skin permeation rate of estradiol.

30 FIG. 11 is a graph showing the effect of concentration of enhancer in the dosage units on the skin permeation rate of levonorgestrel.

35 FIG. 12 is a graph showing the profiles of the absorption of the progestin (levonorgestrel) and the estrogen (estradiol) over a period of time.

40 FIG. 13 is a graph showing the effect of the diffusional resistance [$10^2/KD$] of the separating layer on 45 absorption rate ratio of levonorgestrel and estradiol.

50 FIG. 14A and 14B are graphs showing the results of 55 varying the CH_2 group number of alkyl chain length in two classes of transdermal skin permeation enhancing agents

5 (alkanoic acids and alkanols) on skin permeation rate of levonorgestrel contained in the dosage units.

10 FIG. 15 is a graph of a series of curves showing cumulative (Q) transdermal absorption of ethinyl estradiol from "AD TYPE TDDS" (adhesive type transdermal drug delivery system) through hairless mouse skin using seven different formulas.

15 20 FIG. 16 is a graph of a series of curves showing cumulative (Q) transdermal absorption of norethindrone from adhesive type transdermal drug delivery system through hairless mouse skin using seven different formulas.

25 30 FIG. 17 is a graph showing transdermal absorption rates of ethinyl estradiol across human cadaver skin depending upon transdermal absorption enhancer concentration.

35 FIG. 18 is a graph showing transdermal absorption rates of norethindrone across human cadaver skin depending upon transdermal absorption enhancer concentration.

40 45 FIG. 19 is a graph showing the effect of loading dose of norethindrone through human cadaver skin from dosage units of the invention in which both the polymer layer and adhesive layer are made from adhesive polymer.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION AND THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

10

The backing layer can be made of any suitable material which is impermeable to the hormones of the polymer layer.

15

The backing layer serves as a protective cover for the polymer layer and provides also a support function. The

20

backing can be formed so that it has essentially the same size as the hormone-containing polymer layer or it can be of

25

larger dimension so that it can extend beyond the side of the disc layer or overlay the side or sides of the hormone-

30

containing disc layer and then can extend outwardly in a manner that the surface of the extension of the backing

35

layer can be the base for an additional adhesive means. For long-term applications, e.g., for seven days, it is

40

desirable to use microporous and/or breathable backing laminates, so hydration or maceration of the skin can be

45

minimized. The adhesive means holds the dosage unit in intimate contact with the skin of the subject treated.

50

Examples of materials suitable for making the backing layer are films of high and low density polyethylene, polypropylene,

55

polyurethane, polyvinylchloride, polyesters such as poly(ethylene phthalate), metal foils, metal foil laminates of such suitable polymer films, and the like. Preferably,

the materials used for the backing layer are laminates of such polymer films with a metal foil such as aluminum foil.

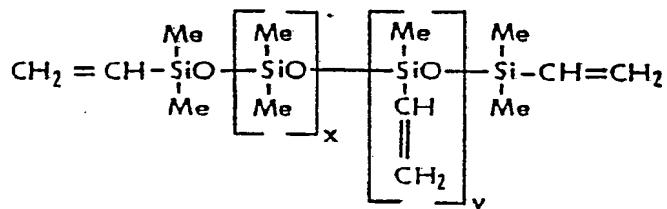
In such laminates, a polymer film of the laminate will usually be in contact with the polymer layer. The backing

5 layer can be any appropriate thickness which will provide
 the desired protective and support functions. A suitable
10 thickness will be from about 10 to about 200 microns.
 Desirably, the thickness will be from about 20 to about 150
 microns, and preferably be from about 30 to about 100
15 microns.

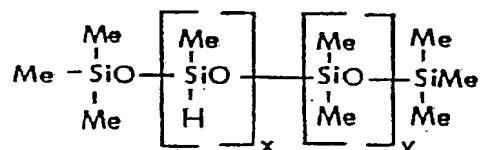
20 The polymer layer can also be made from pressure
sensitive adhesive polymers, such as polyacrylic, silicone
or other suitable polymer adhesives. The polymer layer can
also be made, for example, from silicone elastomers of the
25 general polydimethylsiloxane structure, such as silicone
polymers of the following general formula:

A. COMPOSITION

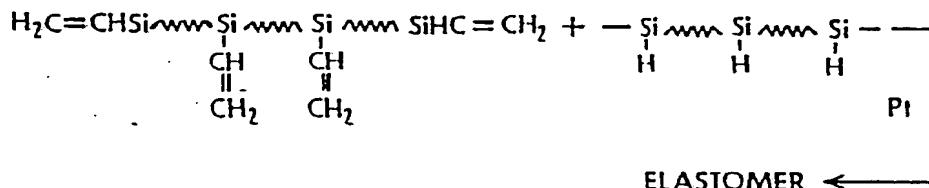
1) POLYMER



2) CROSSLINKER



B. CURING CHEMISTRY



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5 wherein Me is methyl and wherein x and y represent
independent numbers sufficiently large to provide the
10 desired properties in the polymer layer.

15 The silicone polymers selected preferably are cross-
linkable at moderate temperatures, such as room temperature,
20 using cross-linking catalysts which are biologically acceptable
25 in the final polymer layer and which are compatible
30 with the hormone components to be used in making the polymer
35 dosage forms. Various suitable crosslinking agents can be
40 used in crosslinking the above polymer, such as the silicone
45 elastomer containing reactive H atoms, if the base polymer
50 has vinyl groups such as terminal $-\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$ groups. A
55 platinum catalyst can be used for such crosslinking
60 reaction. If a silicone polymer component has hydroxy
65 groups, it can be crosslinked with a tetrapropoxy silane
70 using a catalyst such as a suitable tin catalyst. Some
75 suitable silicone polymers are cross-linkable copolymers
80 having dimethyl and methylvinyl siloxane units, which can be
85 cross-linked as by using a suitable peroxide catalyst.
90 Other cross-linking sites can be present in the polysiloxane
95 elastomers used. Suitable silicone medical-grade polymers
100 are sold under the designations MDX-4-4210, Silastic 382,
105 Q7-4635, Q7-4650, Q7-4665, Q7-4735, Q7-4750, and Q7-4765.

110 The silicone polymers selected can also have a "block"
115 or "graft" structure or both. By "block" structure is meant
120 that the polymer can have a section or block of the polymer
125 chain structure of the polymer which can have a repeating

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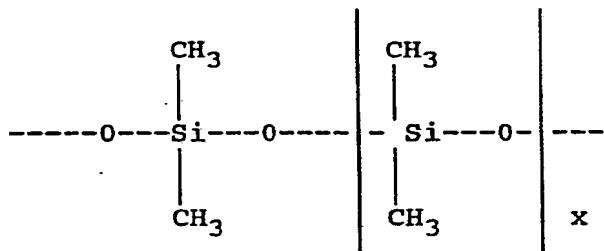
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10 unit of one type, such as dimethylsiloxane, and then have a
succeeding block made up of repeating units of another type,
such as methylvinylsiloxane, diphenylsiloxane, diisopropyl
siloxane units or other siloxane or silane units or even of
15 monomer units of a compatible non-siloxane or non-silane
type. The blocks can vary in length and be repeated as
desired. For example, if the blocks are represented as "A"
20 and "B", respectively, the block copolymer can be A-B or A-
B-A or A-B-A-B, etc. The "graft" structure simply means
25 that to the main polymer chain, one or more polymer chains
are attached. Those grafted chains can have the same poly-
mer units as those of the main chain or can be different, as
30 described above in connection with "block" copolymers.
Also, the polymer used can be of a different type wherein
35 copolymerizable monomers are placed together in a polymeri-
zation reactor so the main chain can have a certain popula-
tion of each of the monomeric units.

40 The following are examples of block copolymers of the type which can be utilized in this invention.

45

"A" Block

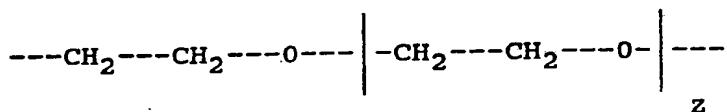


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"B" Block

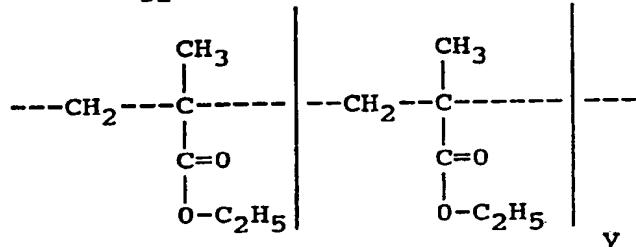
10



15

or

20



25

wherein x, y and z represent the number of repeating units sufficient to provide the desired property in the polymer, such as from about 10 to about 5000.

35

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Generally, those polymers used to form the biologically acceptable polymer layer are those capable of forming thin walls or coatings through which hormones can pass at a controlled rate. Suitable polymers are biologically and pharmaceutically compatible, non-allergenic and insoluble in and compatible with body fluids or tissues with which the device is contacted. The use of soluble polymers is to be avoided since dissolution or erosion of the matrix would affect the release rate of the hormones as well as the capability of the dosage unit to remain in place for convenience of removal.

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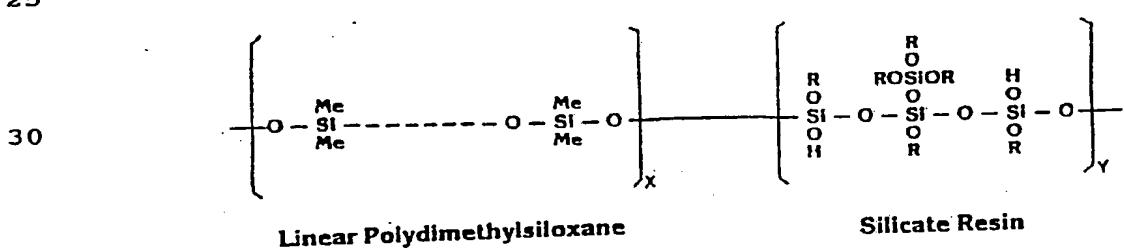
Exemplary materials for fabricating the biologically acceptable polymer layer include polyethylene, polypropylene, polyurethane, ethylene/propylene copolymers, ethyl-

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5 cross-linking monomers for polyacrylate polymers include
10 polymethacrylic esters of polyols such as butylene diacry-
late and dimethacrylate, trimethylol propane trimethacrylate
15 and the like. Other monomers which provide such sites
include allyl acrylate, allyl methacrylate, diallyl maleate
and the like.

20 The adhesive and polymer layers are suitably made using
a silicone based pressure sensitive adhesive, such as a
(polydimethylsiloxane-silicate resin) copolymer adhesive
depicted by the following formula:



40 wherein Me is methyl and R is $-\text{Si}(\text{CH}_3)_3$ and x and y repre-
41 sent independent numbers of repeating units sufficient to
42 provide the desired properties in the adhesive polymer and
43 other polymer layers.

50 For example, adhesive polymer products or amine-resistant adhesive polymer products sold by Dow Corning, such as
55 the ones sold under the designations of DC-355, Bio-PSA and X7-2920 medical adhesives, are suitable for use in making
the adhesive layer. The adhesive polymer must be biologi-

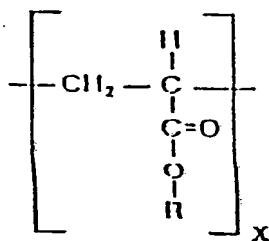
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5 cally acceptable and compatible with the hormones and skin
10 permeation enhancer, if used. Certain polyacrylic adhesive
15 polymers (in the form of an alkyl ester, amide, free acid,
or the like) or polyisobutylene adhesive polymers can also
be used with some hormones. Illustrative of suitable
adhesive polymers for use in making the polymer layer are
shown by the following formulas:

20 Polyisobutylene Adhesive



35 Polyacrylic Adhesive



50 wherein x represents the number of repeating units suffi-
cient to provide the desired properties in the adhesive
polymer and R is H or lower alkyl including ethyl, butyl and
2-ethylhexyl.

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5 other suitable hypoallergenic pressure-sensitive contact adhesive compositions can also be used. A preferred
10 adhesive layer is pressure-sensitive.

15 However, depending upon pharmaceutical compatibility and other factors, if desired, the adhesive means can extend in the form of a ring attached, for example, to an extended portion of the backing layer so that the adhesive layer is adjacent to the sidewall of the hormone-containing disc layer. The width of such adjacent adhesive ring must be adequate to hold the dosage unit securely to the subject
20 being treated. Ordinarily, a suitable width of such adhesive ring can be about 0.1 to about 1.0 cm, preferably about
25 0.2 to about 0.8 cm.

30 The adhesive layer then is finally covered with a releasable protective film layer which is made from materials which are substantially impermeable to the hormones, the skin permeation enhancer, if used, and any other components of the dosage unit. The polymer materials and metal
35 foil laminates used for the backing layer may also be used to make the protective layer, provided the layer is made
40 strippable or releasable such as by applying conventional siliconizing or teflon coating. A suitable releasable material for use with silicone polymer adhesive DC-355 and X7-
45 2970 is Scotchpak 1022 material sold by the 3M Company or
50 Bio-Release Material by Dow Corning.

55 In making the hormone-containing polymer layer, silicone elastomers, such as (polydimethylsiloxane-silicate

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resin) copolymer, polyacrylic adhesive, such as sold under the designation Duro-Tak, of the formula described above, and other biocompatible adhesive polymers which provide a stable environment for the hormones and permit their release, can suitably be used. In making hormone-dispersed dosage units, it has been found suitable to use a dispersing agent. For example, polyethylene glycol such as polyethylene/water combination. PEG 400 is suitable. Suitable enhancing agents can also be used as the dispersing agent. Other suitable dispersing agents can also be used instead so long as they are effective. Depending upon the hormones and the drug loading desired, a suitable amount of a dispersing agent can be varied from zero to about 20 percent (by weight) or more based on the weight of the polymer layer. Commonly, the dispersing agent is added together with the hormone into the polymer used in making the layer. The amount of dispersing agent added is dependent upon the rate of permeation desired, the particular hormones used, and at times, other factors. The amount of the hormones added depends upon the dosage rate of hormone and the duration of treatment desired in each dosage unit and the amount which can be incorporated into the polymer layer to retain suitable structural, diffusion and other properties in the final polymer layer. It has been found, for example, that the hormones can be satisfactorily added to 50 parts of the polymer used in making

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5 the polymer layer, such as polyacrylic adhesive polymer. It
has been found to be preferable to add and disperse the
10 estrogen used in an amount of a selected adhesive polymer.
The mixture of the polymer and hormones is then thoroughly
15 mixed using a high-torque mixer to form a homogeneous
solution or microdispersion of the hormones in the polymer.
After the mixing step, the composition is subjected to
20 vacuum to remove entrapped air.

25 The deaerated mixture is then applied as by solvent
casting technique, to a suitable substrate, like backing
30 laminate or release liner or other suitable substrate and
heated to a suitable elevated temperature to remove the
35 solvent. The temperature used should not cause significant
degradation of the hormones. The polymer sheet desirably is
about 10 to 400 microns, preferably about 20 to about 300
40 microns, in thickness. The resulting medicated polymer
sheet is removed from the casting machine and another layer
45 of medicated polymer, containing the same or different
hormone, can be further coated on the first medicated
polymer layer formed by direct casting or lamination.

45 The optional separating layer can be made of the
polymeric materials. In making the separating layer, it has
50 been found suitable to use a bioacceptable polyisobutylene
having a suitable molecular weight. For example, the
55 polyisobutylene use can suitably have a relative molecular
mass M_v (viscosity average) of from about 800,000 to about
900,000, such as that of polyisobutylene sold by BASF under

5 the designation Oppanol B80, which has a relative molecular
10 mass M_v (viscosity average) value of 850,000. The viscosity
15 average relative molecular mass is obtained from the
20 equation: $J_0 = 3.06 \times 10^{-2} \times M^{0.65}$. The viscosity or
25 molecular weight should, generally speaking, be selected
which is sufficiently high to provide a separating layer
which is dimensionally stable and which is not excessively
high so as to make fabrication of the separating layer un-
necessarily difficult to provide a functional and pharm-
aceutically elegant dosage unit.

30 The thickness of the separating layer can vary as
35 desired. However, it has been found that a layer thickness
40 after any solvent removal of about 50 to about 150 microns
45 to be suitable, with a thickness of about 75 to 125 microns
50 to be preferable. It has been found that a separating layer
55 having about 100 micron thickness made of a polyisobutylene
having a viscosity or molecular weight such as that of
Oppanol B80 to function well, if the estrogen in the polymer
layer is 17-beta-estradiol or ethinyl estradiol.

45 The separating layer should have sufficient thickness
50 to minimize any migration, especially under prolonged
55 storage conditions at elevated temperatures, such as 37°C or
45°C or greater. Also, the separating layer should be made
of a suitable material and with a sufficient thickness to
decelerate the rate of transmission of the estrogen in the
polymer layer, as needed to provide suitably a delivery

5 ratio of transdermal absorption from about 0.5:1 to about
30:1, a ratio of about 1 to about 20 being a preferable
10 ratio range.

15 It has been found that the separating layer can be made as by dissolving about 10 parts of a suitable polyisobutylene, such as Oppanol B80 polyisobutylene in a suitable solvent, such as a mixture of cyclohexane, hexane and 20 heptane (for example, a 1:1:1 mixture). The mixture is gently agitated such as by using a suitable rotator.

When the dissolution is substantially completed to provide a clear polyisobutylene solution, the solution can be used to coat a low adhesion film, such as a polyester film with a fluoropolymer-coated surface such as the material sold by 3M Company under the designation Scotch-Pak 1022. A R.D. wireless coating bar (such as a #12) can be used for coating. The resulting coating is dried and is repeated as necessary to obtain a layer of desired thickness, such as 100 microns. The separating layer thus formed can be assembled into the dosage unit by lamination to the polymer layer. Alternatively, the separating layer can be applied to the surface of the upper adhesive layer having present progestin before being assembled by lamination to the surface of the lower polymer layer having present estrogen. The finished multilayered polymer layer can then be cut to form discs with desired shapes and sizes. The polymer layer disc generally should not exceed about 100 sq. cm in area, suitably about 5 to 100 sq. cm, preferably, about 8 to about

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15 The hormone-containing polymer layer, generally speak-
ing, may contain some excess of the dispersed hormone over
the dosage amount desired to be transdermally absorbed by
the subject to be treated. Ordinarily, this excess is
20 small, such as less than 2-fold excess over a weekly pro-
jected dose, depending upon the physicochemical properties
25 of the hormones, as well as the nature of the polymer in the
polymer layer disc and other factors.

The adhesive means, if it contains a skin permeation enhancer, is made as by first blending the enhancer and the progestin and then directly dissolving the blend in the adhesive polymer solution or in a solvent which is compatible with the adhesive polymer solution used to make the adhesive layer containing the skin permeation enhancer. Any suitable amount of solvent can be used as necessary to dissolve the quantity of enhancer and progestin to be admixed with the adhesive polymer solution used. For example, 3 to 10 parts of solvent can be used to dissolve one part of skin permeation enhancer, depending upon the solubility of the enhancer. When using silicone-based adhesive solution, it has been found suitable to use 2 to 20 parts of skin permeation enhancer in 20 to 50 parts of solvent (such as acetone, methyl ethyl ketone,

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5 trifluorotrichloroethane or other suitable solvent) and add
the solution to 100 parts of the adhesive solution. The
10 enhancer-adhesive combination is thoroughly mixed and a
coating thereof is applied using a film coating machine,
15 such as referred to in the art as a K-bar coater, directly
onto the polymer layer or to a strippable release liner
before laminating onto the polymer layer, as described
20 above. A suitable release liner is a poly(ethylene
phthalate) laminated with aluminum foil or a Teflon-coated
polyester film such as sold under the designation Scotchpak
25 1022 or Bio-release X7-2741 or X7-2752. The poly(ethylene
phthalate) side to which the adhesive-enhancer-progestin
30 coating is applied, is made strippable by conventional sili-
conizing or by other suitable means. The thickness of the
adhesive-enhancer-progestin layer normally is suitably about
35 20 to about 200 microns, preferably about 30 to about 150
microns.

40 The amount of enhancer in the adhesive layer depends in
part on the rapidity at which it is desired that the hor-
mones be absorbed. Generally speaking, about 1 to about 40
45 percent of skin permeation enhancer based on the weight of
the adhesive is suitable, depending upon the enhancer, adhe-
50 sive polymer, desired adhesiveness and other factors.
Desirably, about 5 to about 30 percent of skin permeation
enhancers are used depending upon the above recited factors.
55 The adhesive layer containing the progestin and skin permea-
tion enhancer is transferred to the polymer layer disc

5 surfaces by application of lamination technique under a
10 constant pressure. In order to assure adequate adhesion of
the adhesive polymer layer to the skin of the subject
15 treated, additional adhesive polymer coating having a rela-
tively low concentration of enhancer, e.g., 1-20 percent
based on the weight of the adhesive polymer can be further
20 applied to the surface of progestin-enhancer-polymer layer.
The thickness of this coating ordinarily is a minor percen-
25 tage of the thickness of the final adhesive layer, such as
20-40 percent of the total adhesive polymer layer. In the
progestin-containing adhesive layer having a suitable higher
30 concentration of the enhancer is used. Suitable higher
concentrations of enhancer are usually 10 to about 30 per-
35 cent based on the adhesive polymer weight, the solubility
and desired final amount of skin enhancer agent and other
40 factors. The solvent of the respective coatings is removed
by evaporation. The respective coatings can be combined to
make the final multi-compartment fertility-control trans-
45 dermal dosage form by application of lamination technique
under a constant pressure or sequential solvent casting
technique.

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5 an amount of dispersed enhancing agent or can be essentially
free of enhancing agent, depending on rate considerations,
10 the estrogen and progestin used, the polymer and adhesive
used in making the respective layers. The second layer will
15 be made of an adhesive which is the same as used in the
first adhesive layer or can be a different biocompatible
adhesive within the description outlined above and will be
20 free or essentially free of the estrogen or progestin used
in making the respective estrogen and progestin layers. The
first and second layers can be made in the manner described
25 above for the adhesive layer. The layers can be of the
thicknesses described above or can be adjusted to a somewhat
30 lesser thickness.

The multi-layer transdermal hormone dosage units are
35 excised. The backing layer, if desired, can be shaped
around the sides of the dosage unit, including the polymer
layer, if such protection is desired. The resulting hormone
40 polymer dosage unit forms are then placed in appropriate
packaging for storage until they are to be applied in trans-
dermal treatment.

45 At least one estrogen and at least one progestin as
defined above are dissolved and/or microdispersed in the
50 polymer and adhesive layers, respectively. With the con-
trolled release of the hormones at a relatively steady rate
over a prolonged period, typically several days and prefer-
55 ably one week, the subject is provided with the benefit of a
steady infusion of the hormones over a prolonged period.

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5 One of the presently preferred estrogens is 17-beta-estradiol. It is a natural hormone and ordinarily transder-
10 mally delivered by an adaptable system of this invention at a desirable daily rate. The 17-beta-estradiol is compatible
15 and can be dissolved or microdispersed in the polymer. The transdermal dosage unit designed for one-week therapy is
20 required to deliver at least about 100 to about 500 mcg (preferably about 125 to about 250 mcg)/day of norgestimate,
25 about 1000 mcg (preferably about 500 to about 1500 mcg)/day of norethindrone or about 25 to about 200 mcg (preferably
30 about 50 to about 150 mcg)/day of levonorgestrel and 20-50 mcg/day of 17-beta-estradiol (or an equivalent effective
35 amount of ethinyl estradiol or another estrogen). In fertility control, that amount of progestin is believed to be necessary to inhibit ovulation and that amount of estrogen is believed needed to maintain normal female physiology and characteristics. Derivatives of 17-beta-estradiol which are
40 biocompatible, capable of being absorbed transdermally and preferably bioconvertible to 17-beta-estradiol can also be used, if the amount of absorption meets the required daily dose of the estrogen component and if the hormone components
45 are compatible. Such derivatives of estradiol can be selected from esters, either mono- or di-esters. The mono-
50 esters can be either 3- or 17- esters. The estradiol esters can be, illustratively speaking, estradiol-3,17-diacetate; estradiol-3-acetate; estradiol-17-acetate; estradiol-3,17-

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5 divalerate; estradiol-3-valerate; estradiol-17-valerate; 3-
10 mono, 17-mono and 3,17-dipivilate esters; 3-mono, 17-mono
15 and 3,17-dipropionate esters; corresponding cypionate, heptanoate,
20 estrone; and other estrogenic steroids and derivatives
thereof which are transdermally absorbable, including benzestrol,
chlorotrianisene, dienestrol, mestranol, and the
like.

The progestin can be selected from norethindrone, norgestimate, levonorgestrel, (or norgestrel containing both levonorgestrel and its (+) enantiomer), norethynodrel, dydrogesterone, ethynodiol diacetate, hydroxyprogesterone caproate, medroxyprogesterone acetate, norethindrone acetate, norgestrel, progesterone, and the like.

If levonorgestrel is used as the progestin, account must be taken of its high progestin potency on a weight basis. The amount used in the adhesive layer adequate for a daily dose can vary so long as it is effective in combination with the estrogen used to provide the desired fertility control or estrogen replacement. Ordinarily, in fertility control, an effective amount in the range from about 25 to about 200 will be used, preferably about 50 to about 150 per dosage unit. In making an estrogen replacement dosage unit, lower daily dosages are adequate for effective estrogen therapy.

It will be suggested to those skilled in the art to use other estrogens or progestins in forming the dosage units of

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10 this invention. Such use of other estrogens and progestins are intended to be within the scope of this invention insofar as use thereof provides satisfactory dosage units within the spirit of this invention.

15 It is further desirable to vary the ratio of progestin/estrogen absorption dosage rate among the first, second and third week dosage units.

20 In the first week dosage unit, it is desirable to have a rate of absorption of about equal amounts of progestin and estrogen (ratio of about 1/1), based upon use of levonorgestrel as the progestin and estradiol as the estrogen. The ratio can be varied such as from about 0.75:1 to about 25 1.25:1 to provide an effective dosage amount. In use of other progestins and estrogen, the amounts used will be 30 adjusted to provide a rate amounts absorbed which are bioequivalent to the respective rate amounts of progestin and 35 estradiol.

40 In the second week dosage unit, a progestin/estrogen rate of absorption ratio of about 1.5:1 is, generally speaking, suitable. However, the rate of absorption ratio can be 45 varied such as from 1.25:1 to about 2.5:1, depending upon several factors encountered in treatment.

50 In the third week dosage unit, a rate amount of absorption ratio of about 2.5:1 progestin to estrogen, based again 55 upon use of levonorgestrel and estradiol, is, generally speaking, suitable. The rate ratio can be varied to provide

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5 the effective dosage amount, for example, from about 2:1 to
about 4:1 or 5:1, depending upon variables encountered in
10 practice, to provide a safe and effective fertility control.
Again, in the use of other progestins and estrogens other
15 than levonorgestrel and estradiol, adjustments to provide
rate amounts bioequivalent to levonorgestrel and estradiol,
respectively, will be made.

20 In the use of synthetic estrogens, it is ordinarily
advised presently to keep daily administration below about
25 50 mcg per subject.

25 In estrogen replacement therapy, it is ordinarily
advised that estradiol administration can range up to about
30 150 mcg per subject per day.

35 The skin permeation enhancers which can be used in
carrying out this invention can vary. Ones that give pre-
ferred results with the polymer dosage unit form having a
40 specific hormone can vary. In some instances, the use of
permeation enhancer in making a dosage unit will result in
good or even excellent absorption for one hormone, may
45 result in no or relatively low enhancement when another
hormone is used. Use of combinations of two or more of the
skin permeation enhancer compounds frequently result in
50 superior results, such as greater transdermal absorption.

55 Specific skin permeation enhancers which can be used in
making the polymer dosage forms of this invention include
saturated and unsaturated fatty acids and their esters,
alcohols, monoglycerides, acetate, diethanolamides and N, N-

5 dimethylamides, such as oleic acid, propyl oleate, oleyl
10 acetate, propyl myristate, isopropyl myristate, myristyl
alcohol, myristyl N, N-dimethyl amide, stearic acid and
15 stearyl alcohol, stearyl propyl ester, monostearin, and
combinations of them with, for example, 1-dodecylazacyclo-
heptan-2-one sold under the trademark Azone by Nelson
20 Research and Development; decyl methyl sulfoxide, dimethyl
sulfoxide, salicylic acid and derivatives, N,N-diethyl-m-
toluamide, crotamiton, 1-substituted azacycloalkan-2-ones
25 such as disclosed in U.S. Patent 4,316,893 (the 1-substi-
tuent having 0-17 carbon atoms, preferably, 1-11 carbon
30 atoms), and various other compounds which are biologically
compatible and have transdermal permeation enhancement
activity. It has been found that n-decyl alcohol is a pre-
35 ferred enhancing agent. Also, it has been found that capric
acid is a preferred enhancing agent. Modifications will be
40 suggested to those skilled in the art to the chemical struc-
tures represented by n-decyl alcohol or capric acid which do
not detract substantially from their function as preferred
45 enhancing agent. It has been found that about 10 to about
50 40 percent (W/W) of n-decyl alcohol or capric acid is ordi-
narily a suitable amount. It has been found that about 15
55 to about 30 percent (W/W) in the adhesive layer of these
enhancing agents provide highly satisfactory skin absorption
enhancement and satisfactory adhesion. Amounts higher than

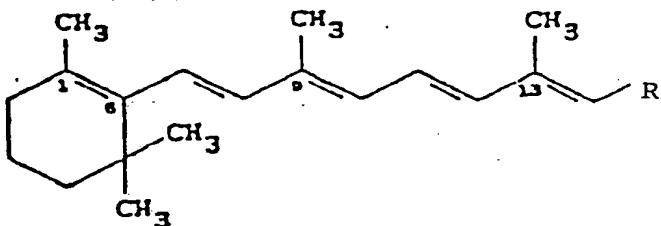
5 35 or 40 percent (W/W) can interfere with satisfactory adhesion to the subject being treated.

10 It has been found that retinol, biocompatible and effective esters thereof, for example retinyl palmitate, retinoic acid, biocompatible and effective esters thereof, 15 are effective transdermal skin permeation enhancing agents. For example, these compounds are effective as secondary 20 enhancing agents. In illustration, these compounds have been found especially effective in combination with n-decyl 25 alcohols, the compounds are the alcohol, the carboxylic acid, and the biocompatible and effective esters of said acid and of said alcohol formed with a carboxylic acid 30 wherein R represents -OH, -COOH and the biocompatible and effective esters thereof.

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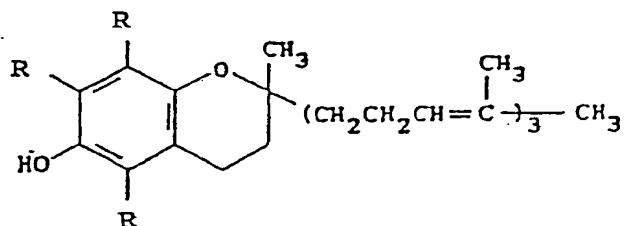


Also, alpha-tocopherol is an effective transdermal skin permeation enhancing agent. Alpha-tocopherol has been found to be highly effective, for example, in combination with n-decyl alcohol. Biocompatible and effective compounds of the following formula including alpha-tocopherol are also included as enhancing agents:

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wherein R is selected from hydrogen or methyl. Also included are the biocompatible and effective carboxylic acid esters of the compounds represented by the formula.

A combination of 20 parts of either alpha-tocopherol, retinol, retinyl palmitate, retinoic acid, dl-alpha-tocopherol, dl-alpha-tocopherol acetate, or combinations thereof together with 100 parts of n-decyl alcohol have been found to be effective enhancing agents in carrying out the invention, such as for example when levonorgestrel or norgesterol or biocompatible derivatives thereof are used as the progestin.

Ethyl alcohol and other short chain alkanols (with 1-4 carbon atoms) which have substantially the same properties and activity as ethyl alcohol do not come within the definition of skin permeation enhancer as used herein.

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The following examples are in illustration of the invention and are not intended to be limiting.

10

Example 1

15

The following ingredients are used in making the estrogen-containing polymer layer: ethinyl estradiol, 5 parts; polyacrylic adhesive formulation sold by National Starch and Chemical Corp. as Duro-Tak 80-1054, 95 parts.

20

25

The ethinyl estradiol is added to the polyacrylic adhesive using a high torque mixer (sold by Cole-Parmer Company) at a rate of about 1000 RPM.

30

35

The hormone mixture is applied to the backing layer formed of polyester/aluminum laminate sold by 3M Company as Scotch-Pak 1005, by using a K-bar coater equipped with a number 3 bar. The resulting polymer layer is dried in the hood for one hour to remove the solvents. The thickness of the polymer layer obtained is about 10 microns.

40

45

To the polymer layer, a 5% (W/W) norethindrone in polyacrylic adhesive solution is applied using a K-bar coater (with #16 bar). In addition to norethindrone, this coating solution also contains 25% (W/W) of *n*-decyl alcohol or an amount of other effective skin permeation enhancers. The coating is dried at ambient room temperature for 24 hours. The dried norethindrone-reservoir adhesive layer has a dry thickness of about 120 microns.

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5 The bilayer dosage units are then covered with a trans-
parent low-adhesion release liner (Scotch-Pak 1022/3M). The
10 completed dosage layers are then cut into dosage units
having various shapes and sizes by using a specially-
15 designed device cutter, such as a 20 cm² rectangular shape.

15 The transdermal absorption of the hormones from the
anti-fertility polymer dosage units of this invention is
20 evaluated by using a skin specimen from a "hairless" mouse
or human cadaver by following the procedure described by
25 Y.W. Chien, K. Valia and U.B. Doshi in Drug Develop. & Ind.
Pharm., 11(7) 1195-1212 (1985).

30 Transdermal polymer dosage units are obtained following
generally the procedures described above and the results are
evaluated as shown in the following Tables 1-2.

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TABLE 1

10 Rates of Permeation¹⁾ for Ethinyl Estradiol and Norethindrone Across Hairless Mouse Skin²⁾

15	Formulation	Enhancer	Permeation Rate (mcg/cm ² /hr \pm S.D.)	(n = 3)
20			Ethinyl Estradiol ³⁾	Norethindrone ⁴⁾
25	1	none	0.04 (\pm 0.01)	0.45 (\pm 0.07)
30	2	IPM	0.25 (\pm 0.05)	0.97 (\pm 0.19)
35	3	DMSO	0.13 (\pm 0.02)	0.52 (\pm 0.14)
	4	DeMS	0.16 (\pm 0.03)	0.39 (\pm 0.07)
	5	LA	0.19 (\pm 0.03)	0.76 (\pm 0.20)
	6	OA	0.26 (\pm 0.04)	1.21 (\pm 0.22)
	7	DeA	0.30 (\pm 0.06)	2.51 (\pm 0.49)
	8	CA	0.25 (\pm 0.04)	2.04 (\pm 0.30)

1) 12 samples were taken during 115 hours of study.

2) Seven-week-old female hairless mouse abdominal skin.

3) Loading dose: 30.5 (+1.3) mcg/cm²

4) Loading dose: 338.0 (+10.1) mcg/cm²

IPM (isopropyl myristate); DMSO (dimethyl sulfoxide); DeMS (decyl methyl sulfoxide); LA (lauric acid); OA (oleic acid); DeA (Decyl alcohol); CA (capric acid)

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TABLE 2

10

Rates of Permeation¹⁾ for Ethinyl Estradiol
and Norethindrone Across Human Cadaver Skin²⁾

15

Formulation	Enhancer	Permeation Rate (mcg/cm ² /hr \pm S.D.)	(n = 3)
		Ethinyl Estradiol ³⁾	Norethindrone ⁴⁾
1	none	0.02 (\pm 0.004)	0.14 (\pm 0.03)
2	IPM	0.09 (\pm 0.02)	0.39 (\pm 0.07)
3	DMSO	0.04 (\pm 0.01)	0.17 (\pm 0.03)
4	DeMS	0.05 (\pm 0.01)	0.12 (\pm 0.02)
5	LA	0.07 (\pm 0.02)	0.26 (\pm 0.04)
6	OA	0.09 (\pm 0.02)	0.46 (\pm 0.09)
7	DeA	0.13 (\pm 0.02)	0.89 (\pm 0.18)
8	CA	0.07 (\pm 0.01)	0.80 (\pm 0.14)

1) 12 samples were taken during 122 hours of study.

2) A 17-year-old black boy's left anteriel leg with average thickness of 220 (\pm 26) microns.

3) Loading dose: 30.5 (± 1.3) mcg/cm².

4) Loading dose: 338.0 (± 10.1) mcg/cm².

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Example 2

10 The formulations of the above Tables are repeated using
the following procedure.

15 The following ingredients are used in making the estrogen-containing polymer layer: ethinyl estradiol, 5 parts; polyacrylic adhesive formulation sold by National Starch and Chemical Corp. as Duro-Tak 80-1054, 95 parts.

20 The ethinyl estradiol is added to the polyacrylic adhesive using a high torque mixer (sold by Cole-Parker Company) at a rate of about 1000 RPM.

25 The hormone mixture is applied to the backing layer formed of polyester/aluminum laminate sold by 3M Company as Scotch-Pak 1005, by using a K-bar counter equipped with a 30 number 3 bar. The resulting polymer layer is dried in the hood for one hour to remove the solvents. The thickness of 35 the polymer layer obtained is about 10 microns.

40 To the polymer layer, a 5% (W/W) norethindrone in polyacrylic adhesive solution is applied on a transparent low-adhesion substrate using a K-bar coater (with #16 bar). In 45 addition to norethindrone, this coating solution also contains up to 50% (W/W) of n-decyl alcohol or capric acid as skin permeation enhancer. The coating is dried in the hood at ambient room temperature for 24 hours. The dried 50 norethindrone-reservoir adhesive layer has a thickness of about 120 microns.

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5 The norethindrone layer is carefully applied to the
ethinyl estradiol layer by lamination technique. The com-
10 pleted dosage layers are then cut into dosage units having
various shapes and sizes by using a specially-designed
15 device cutter, such as 20 cm² rectangular shape.

15 Transdermal polymer dosage units obtained have provided
skin permeation rates as shown in Table 3.

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TABLE 3

Enhancing Effect of Skin Permeation Enhancer on the Skin
 Permeation Rates¹⁾ of Ethinyl Estradiol and Norethindrone
 Across Human Cadaver Skin²⁾

15	Formulation	Enhancer	Permeation Rate (mcg/cm ² /hr \pm S.D.)		(n = 3)
			Ethinyl Estradiol ³⁾	Norethindrone ⁴⁾	
<u>n-Decyl Alcohol (% w/w)</u>					
25	9	0	0.13 (\pm 0.02)	0.10 (\pm 0.02)	
	10	2.5	0.15 (\pm 0.03)	0.09 (\pm 0.02)	
30	11	5.0	0.36 (\pm 0.06)	0.17 (\pm 0.03)	
	12	10.0	0.48 (\pm 0.07)	0.25 (\pm 0.04)	
35	13	25.0	1.28 (\pm 0.19)	1.24 (\pm 0.18)	
	14	50.0	1.06 (\pm 0.18)	1.45 (\pm 0.21)	
<u>Capric acid (% w/w)</u>					
40	15	1.0	0.12 (\pm 0.02)	0.08 (\pm 0.01)	
	16	2.5	0.13 (\pm 0.02)	0.08 (\pm 0.01)	
45	17	5.0	0.19 (\pm 0.03)	0.13 (\pm 0.02)	
	18	10.0	0.26 (\pm 0.04)	0.23 (\pm 0.04)	
50	19	25.0	0.39 (\pm 0.07)	0.33 (\pm 0.05)	
	20	50.0	0.40 (\pm 0.06)	0.49 (\pm 0.10)	

55 1) 13 samples were taken during 168 hours of study period.

2) A white male's anterolateral trunk with average thickness of 180 \pm 20 microns (n = 6) were used.

3) Loading dose: 95.7 (\pm 2.9) mcg/cm²

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Example 3

10 Example 1 is repeated except the ethinyl estradiol loading in the polymer layer is varied from 200 mcg/20 cm² to 1600 mcg/20 cm². The above formulation 13 is used. The data show that the rate of permeation across human skin increases as the loading of ethinyl estradiol increases until the loading concentration reaches about 1600 mcg/20 cm², at which point increased loadings according to the data of the experiment do not provide increased permeability. This is shown in the chart of FIG. 19.

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Example 4

30 Examples 1 and 2 are repeated except bioactively equivalent amounts of 17-beta-estradiol are used instead of ethinyl estradiol.

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Example 5

40 Examples 1 and 2 are repeated except bioactively equivalent amounts of norgestimate are used instead of norethindrone.

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Example 6

50 Examples 1 and 2 are repeated except bioactively equivalent amounts of 17-beta-estradiol and norgestimate are used instead of ethinyl estradiol and norethindrone, respectively.

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Example 7

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Examples 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 are repeated using polydimethylsiloxane adhesive instead of the polyacrylic adhesive.

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Example 8

The following ingredients are used in making a tri-layer transdermal estrogen/progestin dosage unit:

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(I) Ethinyl estradiol, 1 part; polyacrylic adhesive (sold by National Starch and Chemical Corp., as Duro-Tak 80-1054), 99 parts. The ethinyl estradiol is dissolved in the polyacrylic adhesive by gently rotating the container using rotator (Cole-Parmer Company) at low speed (10 rpm) to form a clear solution. This hormone/adhesive mixture is applied by coating to a sheet of polyester/aluminum laminate (sold by 3M Company as Scotch-Pak 1109), on the polyester surface, using a R.D. wireless-coating bar (#8). The resulting polymer layer is dried in the hood for one hour to remove the solvent portion. The thickness of the dried estrogen reservoir polymer adhesive layer obtained is about 40 microns.

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(II) Polyisobutylene polymer (sold by BASF, as Oppanol B80), 10 parts; 1:1:1 mixture of cyclohexane/hexane/heptane as solvent system for Oppanol B80, 90 parts. The polyisobutylene polymer is dissolved in the solvent system in a closed container by gently rotating the container using a rotator (Cole-Palmer Company) at low speed (10 rpm) until all the polymer is dissolved and a clear solution is formed.

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5 This polymer solution is applied to the low-adhesion side of
a substrate (a polyester film with fluoropolymer-coated
10 surface, sold by 3M Company as Scotch-Pak 1022) using R.D.
 wireless coating bar (#12). This polymer coating is dried
15 in the hood for 2 hours. The resulting dried polymer film
 has a thickness of about 100 microns.

20 (III) Norethindrone, 5 parts; n-decyl alcohol, 35
 parts; polyacrylic adhesive (sold by National Starch and
 Chemical Corp. as Duro-Tak 80-1054), 60 parts. The
25 norethindrone is dispersed in n-decyl alcohol by rotating
 gently the container using a rotator (Cole-Palmer Company)
 at low speed (10 rpm) to form a drug suspension. The
30 polyacrylic adhesive is then added to the suspension and the
 mixture is rotated gently again using the same rotator at a
 speed of 10 rpm until a homogeneous mixture is obtained.
35 The mixture is applied to the low-adhesion side of a sub-
 strate (a polyester with fluoropolymer-coated surface, sold
 by 3M Company as Scotch Pak 1022) using a R.D. wireless
40 coating bar (#28). This coating layer is dried in the hood
 for 24 hours. The thickness of the dried norethindrone/n-
45 decyl alcohol reservoir layer obtained is about 250 microns.

50 The polyisobutylene product of (II) is laminated onto
 the product of (I) containing ethinyl estradiol. The layer
 of (III) containing norethindrone is then laminated into the
 combined laminates (I) and (II), on the surface of layer
55 (II), to form the final product. The final laminated
 product is cut into specific size using steel die cutter to

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form the tri-layer transdermal estrogen/progestin dosage unit.

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Units of 10 sq cm are individually packed in the paper/foil/polyester pouches which are then thermally sealed by a thermal sealer. These sealed pouches are stored in the stability testing cabinets (Gravity Convection Incubator, sold by GCA Corp.) at three different temperatures, room temperature, 37°C and 45°C for up to 26 weeks. During the storage, pouches are randomly sampled at specific intervals, according to the sampling schedule shown in Table 4. The units sealed in the pouches are evaluated for their drug content and skin permeation rate profiles. Drug content in each unit was determined by a solvent extraction procedure followed by a high performance liquid chromatograph (HPLC) of the drugs. The skin permeation rate profiles of drugs released from the unit were determined by a hydrodynamically well-calibrated in-vitro skin permeation cell system. The skin specimen freshly excised from 5-to-7 week old female hairless mouse skin was used as the model skin. The skin permeation study was performed at 37°C using 40% V/V PEG 400 saline solution as receptor solution. The steady-state skin permeation rate of norethindrone and ethinyl estradiol was determined from the slope of a Q vs time plot, where Q is the cumulative amount of drug permeating through the skin at a specific sampling time interval. It was calculated by

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5 determining the drug concentration in the receptor solution
by the HPLC assay.

10 Drug content or skin permeation rate of drug determined
from the stability samples were plotted, according to
15 storage temperature, against the storage time. A 95% confi-
dence limit, based on the mean value obtained from the week
0 samples, is established to make statistical judgment on
20 the physical and chemical stability of the unit tested.
Data point that falls outside the 95% confidence limit lines
25 is considered as either chemically (from drug recovery
study) or physically (from skin permeation study) unstable.

30 The stability data are shown in Tables 5 and 6 and are
illustrated in FIGS. and .

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TABLE 4

40	Temperature (KC)	Sampling Schedule (Weeks)						
		0	1	2	4	8	12	26
45	Room	X	-	-	X	X	X	X
	37	X	-	X	X	X	X	X
50	45	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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TABLE 5
Drug Recovery Data of Stability Samples of Dosage Units of Example 8
Sampling Time (Weeks After Storage)

Temperature	Ethinyl Estradiol (mcg/10 cm ² \pm S.D.) ^{1,2)}							Norethindrone (mcg/10 cm ² \pm S.D.) ^{1,2)}						
	0	1	2	4	8	12	26	0	1	2	4	8	12	26
Room Temp.	529.7 (32.98)	---	---	514.5 (35.57)	527.7 (34.99)	517.6 (27.89)	511.1 (31.31)							
37°C	552.2 (33.89)	---	576.8 (37.22)	539.5 (36.67)	531.1 (29.45)	538.9 (43.41)	522.1 (29.82)							
45°C	540.4 (33.71)	530.7 (39.98)	522.7 (37.11)	539.6 (29.67)	513.6 (29.98)	505.7 (42.11)	495.2 (34.72)							
Room Temp.	14.18 (0.98)	---	---	13.43 (1.06)	13.11 (1.18)	14.14 (1.32)	13.01 (1.24)							
37°C	16.67 (1.09)	---	15.57 (1.41)	15.11 (1.11)	14.40 (1.61)	14.11 (1.24)	13.79 (1.18)							
45°C	15.22 (1.43)	15.01 (1.14)	14.77 (1.02)	14.78 (1.31)	13.49 (1.29)	13.29 (1.08)	13.77 (1.19)							

1) Mean \pm Standard Deviation (N = 3)
2) Triplicate sample dosage units solvent extracted at indicated storage times and temperatures and the ethinyl estradiol and norethindrone contents determined using high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC).

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TABLE 6

Skin Permeation Rate of Stability Samples of Dosage Units of Example 8

Temperature	Sampling Time (Weeks After Storage)					
	0	1	2	4	8	12
Ethinylestradiol (mcg/10 cm ² hr \pm S.D.) ^{1,2}						
Room Temp.	0.20 (0.034)	---	---	0.26 (0.033)	0.19 (0.021)	0.26 (0.033)
37°C	0.25 (0.027)	---	0.27 (0.040)	0.22 (0.018)	0.29 (0.027)	0.30 (0.041)
45°C	0.28 (0.041)	0.25 (0.022)	0.21 (0.026)	0.31 (0.039)	0.22 (0.033)	0.23 (0.042)
Norethindrone (mcg/10 cm ² hr \pm S.D.) ^{1,2}						
Room Temp.	2.46 (0.26)	---	---	2.38 (0.31)	2.09 (0.19)	2.15 (0.25)
37°C	2.33 (0.31)	---	2.46 (0.41)	2.37 (0.35)	2.72 (0.41)	2.44 (0.39)
45°C	2.29 (0.33)	2.56 (0.37)	2.33 (0.28)	2.71 (0.37)	2.53 (0.37)	2.56 (0.35)

1) Mean \pm Standard Deviation (N = 3)

2) Permeation rates of triplicate sample dosage units determined using 5-7 week old female hairless mouse skin in Chien et al. procedure for 146 hours and the rates determined from slope of Q vs permeation time plots.

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TABLE 7

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Effect of Thickness of Polyisobutylene Layer (Oppanol B80)
 on Permeation Rates Across Human Cadaver Skin

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Formulation Number	Human Cadaver Skin Permeation Rates ^{a,b,c,d} (mcg/sq cm hr \pm S.D.)	
	Ethinyl Estradiol	Norethindrone
2-0	0.22 (0.041)	1.15 (0.100)
2-1	0.24 (0.033)	1.03 (0.170)
2-2	0.20 (0.021)	1.24 (0.210)
2-3	0.16 (0.029)	0.97 (0.160)
2-4	0.16 (0.031)	1.19 (0.240)
2-5	0.14 (0.021)	1.04 (0.250)
2-6	0.09 (0.017)	1.26 (0.280)
2-7	0.06 (0.014)	1.06 (0.190)
2-8	0.04 (0.010)	1.17 (0.200)
2-9	0.02 (0.006)	1.06 (0.230)

a. 11 samples were taken for each of the triplicate experiments ($n = 3$) during 146 hours of study.
 b. 40% PEG 400/saline was used as receptor solution.
 c. Anterior trunk of a young caucasian female cadaver skin was used.
 d. Procedure of Chien et al. used, samples taken at times 0, 2, 4, 8, 12, 24, 48, 72, 96, 120 and 146, and rates determined from slopes of Q vs permeation time plots.

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TABLE 8

10 Variation of Permeation Rates of Norethindrone
 15 Depending on Content of Enhancer

15	Formulation Number	% (W/W) of n-Decyl Alcohol	Norethindrone Skin Permeation Rate ^{1,2} (mcg/sq cm hr \pm S.D.)
20	2-10	0	0.13 (\pm 0.02)
25	2-11	10	0.31 (\pm 0.07)
30	2-12	20	0.49 (\pm 0.06)
35	2-13	30	0.87 (\pm 0.17)
40	2-7	35	1.10 (\pm 0.24)
45	2-14	40	1.17 (\pm 0.21)
50	2-15	45	1.23 (\pm 0.29)

1) 11 samples were taken for each of triplicate experiments (n = 3) during 146 hours of study.

2) Procedure of Chien et al. used, samples taken at times 0, 2, 4, 8, 12, 24, 48, 72, 96, 120 and 146, and rates determined from slopes of Q vs permeation time plots.

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TABLE 9

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Variation of Permeation Rate Ratios

Depending on Enhancer Contents

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Formulation Number	% (W/W) of n-Decyl Alcohol	Ratio of Permeation Rates Norethindrone/Ethynodiol
2-10	0	4.19 (\pm 0.41)
2-11	10	8.38 (\pm 0.77)
2-12	20	12.56 (\pm 1.49)
2-13	30	18.13 (\pm 2.33)
2-7	35	18.33 (\pm 2.74)
2-14	40	15.39 (\pm 1.96)
2-15	45	13.98 (\pm 1.87)

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TABLE 10

10 Variation of Permeation Rates of Norethindrone
 Depending on Content of Enhancer

15	Formulation Number	% (W/W) of Capric Acid	Norethindrone Skin Permeation Rate ^{1,2} (mcg/sq cm hr \pm S.D.)
20	2-10	0	0.13 (\pm 0.02)
25	2-16	10	0.41 (\pm 0.07)
30	2-17	20	0.66 (\pm 0.11)
35	2-18	30	1.16 (\pm 0.19)
40	2-19	35	1.48 (\pm 0.24)
45	2-20	40	1.59 (\pm 0.34)
50	2-21	45	1.84 (\pm 0.15)

35 1) 11 samples were taken for each of triplicate experiments.
 (n = 3) during 146 hours of study.

40 2) Procedure of Chien et al. used, samples taken at times
 0, 2, 4, 8, 12, 24, 48, 72, 96, 120 and 146, and rates
 determined from slopes of Q vs permeation time plots.

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TABLE 11
Variation of Permeation Ratios
Depending on Enhancer Contents

Formulation Number	% (W/W) of Capric Acid	Ratio of Permeation Rates Norethindrone/Ethinyl Estradiol
2-10	0	4.19 (\pm 0.41)
2-16	10	12.42 (\pm 1.96)
2-17	20	14.04 (\pm 2.11)
2-18	30	15.68 (\pm 1.91)
2-19	35	15.91 (\pm 1.77)
2-20	40	12.82 (\pm 2.01)
2-21	45	12.35 (\pm 1.44)

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TABLE 12

Variation of Permeation Rates of Ethinyl Estradiol Depending on Thickness of Adhesive Layer

Formulation Number	Thickness of Adhesive Layer (Microns)	Ethinyl Estradiol Skin Permeation Rate ^{1,2} (mcg/sq cm hr \pm S.D.)
2-22	142.8	0.079 (\pm 0.009)
2-23	178.5	0.070 (\pm 0.010)
2-24	214.2	0.066 (\pm 0.008)
2-7	250.0	0.060 (\pm 0.011)
2-25	285.6	0.066 (\pm 0.015)
2-26	321.7	0.074 (\pm 0.011)

- 1) 11 samples were taken for each of triplicate experiments. (n = 3) during 146 hours of study.
- 2) Procedure of Chien et al. used, samples taken at times 0, 2, 4, 8, 12, 24, 48, 72, 96, 120 and 146, and rates determined from slopes of Q vs permeation time plots.

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TABLE 13

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Variation of Ratios of Permeation Rates
Depending on Thickness of Adhesive Layer

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	Formulation Number	Thickness of Adhesive Layer (Microns)	Ratio of Permeation Rates Norethindrone/Ethinylestradiol
20	2-22	142.8	3.92 (\pm 0.52)
	2-23	178.5	8.00 (\pm 1.33)
25	2-24	214.2	12.27 (\pm 2.02)
	2-7	250.0	18.33 (\pm 2.34)
	2-25	285.6	18.03 (\pm 2.17)
30	2-26	321.7	17.16 (\pm 1.99)

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The following Tables 14 and 15 show data for dosage units without separating layers in comparison with data shown in Tables 5 and 6 for dosage units with separating layers.

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TABLE 14
Drug Recovery Data from Stability Samples of Bi-Layer Patch System²⁾
Sampling Time (Weeks After Storage)

Temperature	Ethinyl Estradiol (mcg/10 cm ² ± S.D.) ¹⁾						Norethindrone (mcg/10 cm ² ± S.D.) ^{1,2)}
	0	1	2	4	8	12	
Room Temp.	566.9 (33.18)	---	---	569.4 (34.44)	536.8 (33.90)	552.2 (33.11)	539.9 (35.56)
37°C	572.5 (40.26)	---	570.0 (34.67)	545.1 (41.11)	557.5 (31.22)	539.9 (33.31)	533.6 (29.98)
45°C	559.4 (38.88)	566.9 (44.76)	530.5 (39.77)	527.7 (41.12)	510.0 (44.17)	519.8 (36.66)	507.6 (38.98)
							64

1) Mean ± Standard Deviation (N = 3).
 2) Triplicate sample dosage units solvent extracted at indicated storage times and temperatures and the ethinyl estradiol and norethindrone contents determined using high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC).

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TABLE 15
Skin Permeation Rate from Stability Samples of Bi-Layer Patch System 2)
Sampling Time (Weeks After Storage)

Temperature	Ethinyl Estradiol (mcg/10 cm ² hr \pm S.D.) 1)							Norethindrone (mcg/10 cm ² hr \pm S.D.) 2)		
	0	1	2	4	8	12	17	24	26	
Room Temp.	0.59 (0.04)	---	---	0.52 (0.06)	0.55 (0.05)	0.59 (0.04)	0.64 (0.08)			
37°C	0.61 (0.08)	---	0.63 (0.09)	0.70 (0.07)	0.73 (0.11)	0.66 (0.10)	0.79 (0.14)			
45°C	0.66 (0.11)	0.69 (0.13)	0.76 (0.13)	0.77 (0.08)	0.74 (0.09)	0.77 (0.16)	0.87 (0.12)			
								65		
Room Temp.	2.51 (0.21)	---	---	2.58 (0.26)	2.44 (0.31)	2.31 (0.13)	2.20 (0.23)			
37°C	2.88 (0.21)	---	2.95 (0.20)	2.39 (0.15)	2.33 (0.17)	2.22 (0.12)	2.07 (0.11)			
45°C	2.74 (0.33)	2.61 (0.22)	2.50 (0.16)	2.31 (0.15)	1.92 (0.25)	2.05 (0.31)	2.01 (0.11)			

1) Mean \pm Standard Deviation (N = 3).

2) Permeation rate of triplicate sample dosage units determined using 5-7 week old female hairless mouse skin in Chien et al. procedure for 146 hours and the rates determined from slope of Q vs. permeation time plots.

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Example 9

The procedure of Example 8 is followed to provide other transdermal dosage units of this invention: 1) 17-beta-estradiol in combination with norethindrone or norgestimate, 2) ethinyl estradiol-norgestimate combination, and 3) the other combinations with progestins and estrogens selected from those named above, with the amounts necessary to provide the desired fertility control or estradiol replacement. Also, the above dosage units of this Example and Example 8 are repeated using the other adhesives and polymers named above.

Example 10

Transdermal absorption dosage units are made as shown in FIGS. 1 and 2 by following the formulating and fabricating procedure generally described in Example 8. In making the dosage units shown in FIG. 2, the acrylic adhesive used in making layers 2 and 4, respectively, is defined in Example 8. Layer 2 contains levonorgestrel and layer 4 contains 17-beta-estradiol. Separating layer 3 is made using the polyisobutylene adhesive Oppanol B80 defined in Example 8. Backing layer 5 and release liner layer 1 are made from materials described in Example 8.

The primary and secondary enhancing agents are incorporated into levonorgestrel containing layer 2. The amounts of primary and secondary enhancing agents specified in Table 16 are used in making dosage units.

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5 Permeation rates (mcg/sq. cm/hr \pm S.D.) are determined
 using the in vitro procedure of Y. W. Chien et al. identi-
10 fied in Example 1 using male human cadaver skin. The estro-
 gen/progestin ratios shown in Table 16 are calculated from
 the absorption rates shown in Table 16.

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Example 11

20 The transdermal dosage units used and described in
 FIGS. 1-14 are made using the formulating and fabricating
 procedures described in Example 8. The polymer adhesive
25 materials used in Example 8 are used in making adhesive
 layer B, levonorgestrel containing layer C, separating layer
 D and 17-beta-estradiol layer E. The materials used in
30 making release liner layer A and backing layer F are
 described in Example 8.

35 The amounts and identification of enhancing agents used
 in layers B and/or C are described in FIGS. 1-14.

40 The transdermal absorption rates (mcg/sq. cm/hr \pm S.D.)
 are calculated from data determined using the in vitro ana-
 lytical method defined above and the ratios of estrogen/pro-
45 gestin are calculated from the absorption rates determined.

Example 12

50 Other estrogens and progestins are used in place of
 levonorgestrel and 17-beta-estradiol as described and named
 above in proper amounts to provide bioequivalent rate of
55 absorption amounts.

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TABLE 16

Concentration (%W/W) of Enhancer Primary (n-Decyl Alcohol)	Secondary Enhancer (n-Decyl Alcohol)	Adult Male Human Cadaver Skin		Estradiol/Levonorgestrel Rate/Ratio
		Permeation Rate (mcg/sq. cm/hr + S.D.)	Estradiol Levonorgestrel	
25.0	0.0	0.19 (0.031)*	0.080 (0.017)**	2.4 (0.21)***
25.0	5.0 Retinol	0.21 (0.040)	0.141 (0.019)	1.5 (0.11)
25.0	5.0 Retinyl Palmitate	0.18 (0.030)	0.176 (0.027)	1.0 (0.13)
25.0	5.0 Retinoic Acid	0.22 (0.033)	0.159 (0.024)	1.4 (0.16)
25.0	5.0 dl-alpha-Tocopherol	0.20 (0.031)	0.127 (0.021)	1.6 (0.10)
25.0	5.0 dl-alpha-Tocopherol Acetate	0.18 (0.024)	0.182 (0.029)	1.0 (0.07)

*Not statistically significant different from the other 5 formulations with secondary enhancer added. (P > 0.05)

**Addition of secondary enhancer significantly (P < 0.05) increases the permeation rate of levonorgestrel over the formulation containing only primary enhancer.

***Addition of secondary enhancer significantly (P < 0.05) decreases the estradiol/levonorgestrel skin permeation rate ratio over the formulation containing only primary enhancer.

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What is Claimed is:

1. A transdermal estrogen/progestin dosage unit comprising:
 - a) a backing layer which is substantially impervious to the estrogen and progestin hormones to be delivered transdermally;
 - b) a polymer layer which is adhered to said backing layer and which has dissolved and/or microdispersed therein an effective dosage amount of one or more effective estrogens absorbable transdermally and are pharmaceutically acceptable, said polymer being bioacceptable, providing a compatible environment for said one or more estrogens and permitting said one or more estrogens to be transmitted for transdermal absorption, and
 - c) an adhesive layer in intimate contact with said polymer layer, said adhesive layer having dissolved and/or microdispersed therein an effective dosage amount of one or more effective progestins selected from the group consisting of norgestrel, levonorgestrel, and biocompatible derivatives of norgestrel and levonorgestrel, which are absorbable transdermally and are pharmaceutically acceptable, said adhesive layer being bioacceptable, providing a compatible environment for said one or more progestins, and permitting said one or more progestins and said one or more estrogens

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10 to be transmitted for transdermal absorption, said adhesive layer having an effective amount of transdermal skin absorption enhancing agent; said hormones being stable in said polymer and adhesive layers and being transdermally absorbed simultaneously to provide at least minimum effective daily doses of said hormones to effect fertility control or estrogen replacement therapy.

15

20

25 2. A transdermal dosage unit of Claim 1 which has ethinyl estradiol or 17-beta-estradiol or combinations thereof as said one or more estrogens.

30 3. A transdermal dosage unit of Claim 1 which has norgestrel or levonorgestrel or combinations thereof as said one or more progestins.

35

40 4. A transdermal dosage unit of Claim 1 which has ethinyl estradiol as said estrogen and norgestrel or levonorgestrel as said progestin.

45 5. A transdermal dosage unit of Claim 1 which has 17-beta-estradiol as said estrogen and norgestrel or levonorgestrel as said progestin.

50

55 6. A transdermal dosage unit of Claim 1 in which said adhesive layer or said polymer layer or both layers are made from a polyacrylic adhesive polymer.

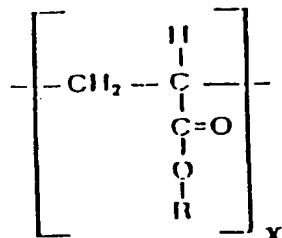
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7. A transdermal dosage unit of Claim 6 in which said polyacrylic adhesive polymer has the following formula:

10

15



20

wherein x represents the number of repeating units sufficient to provide the defined properties of said adhesive layer or polymer layer or both layers and R is selected from H or lower alkyl.

30

8. A transdermal dosage unit of Claim 1 in which the

backing layer is microporous and breathable.

35

9. A transdermal dosage unit of Claim 1 in which said adhesive layer or polymer layer or both layers are made from a silicone adhesive polymer or a polyisobutylene adhesive polymer.

45

10. A transdermal dosage unit of Claim 1 in which the Enhancing Factor with regard to said progestin is at least 1.2, 1.3, 1.5 or 2.0.

11. A transdermal dosage unit of Claim 1 wherein the skin permeation absorption enhancing agent comprises n-decyl alcohol.

5 12. A transdermal dosage unit of Claim 1 which effectively
10 provides at least minimum daily dosage amounts of said
15 estrogen and progestin for about one week, having an
 amount of said skin permeation absorption enhancing
 agent to provide an Enhancing Factor of at least about
 1.5 with regard to said progestin.

20 13. A transdermal dosage unit of Claim 1 wherein said
25 polymer layer having present one or more estrogens and
 said adhesive layer having present one or more proges-
 tins are separated by, but are in respective intimate
30 contact therewith, a bioacceptable adhesive or polymer
 separating layer through which said one or more estro-
 gens are transmitted for desired transdermal absorp-
35 tion, said separating layer made using an adhesive or
 polymer which is free or substantially free of estro-
 gen, progestin and enhancing agents.

40 14. A transdermal dosage unit of Claim 13 which has ethinyl
45 estradiol or 17-beta-estradiol or combinations thereof
 as said one or more estrogens and norgestrel or levo-
 norgestrel or combinations thereof as said one or more
 progestins.

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15. A transdermal dosage unit of Claim 13 wherein the separating layer is made from a bioacceptable adhesive or polymer having a sufficiently high viscosity or molecular weight to provide a dimensionally stable separating layer and a substantial reduction in the transmission rate of said one or more estrogens.

10

15

20

16. A transdermal dosage unit of Claim 15 where the separating layer is made from a polyisobutylene adhesive.

25

17. A transdermal dosage unit of Claim 13 wherein the ratio of transdermally absorbed progestin to estrogen hormones is in the range of about 0.5/1 to about 0.30/1.

30

35

18. A transdermal dosage unit of Claim 17 wherein the ratio of transdermally absorbed progestin to estrogen hormones is in the range of about 1/1 to about 13/1.

40

19. A transdermal dosage unit of Claim 17 wherein the separating layer is made from polyisobutylene.

45

20. A transdermal dosage unit of Claim 18 wherein the separating layer is made from polyisobutylene having a relative molecular mass M_v (viscosity average) of from about 800,000 to about 900,000.

50

5 21. A transdermal dosage unit of Claim 17 which has ethinyl
estradiol or 17-beta-estradiol or combinations thereof
10 as said one or more estrogens and has norgestrel or
levonorgestrel or combinations thereof as said one or
15 more progestins.

15 22. A transdermal dosage unit of Claim 21 wherein the
adhesive or polymer is a bioacceptable polyacrylic
20 adhesive.

25 23. A transdermal dosage unit of Claim 22 where the sep-
arating layer has a thickness of from about 75 to about
30 125 microns and the polyisobutylene has a relative
molecular mass M_v (viscosity average) of at least about
40 800,000.

35 24. A process for controlling fertility by applying to the
skin of a subject desiring said treatment one or more
40 dosage units as defined in Claim 1 to provide effective
daily dosage amounts of said estrogen and progestin for
45 the appropriate term of about three weeks of the men-
strual cycle in successive menstrual cycles.

50 25. A process of Claim 24 wherein the estrogen is ethinyl
estradiol or 17-beta-estradiol or combinations thereof
55 and the progestin is norgestrel or levonorgestrel or
combinations thereof.

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5 26. A process of Claim 24 wherein the dosage units applied
 are as defined in Claim 13.

10 27. A process of Claim 24 wherein the dosage units applied
 are as defined in Claim 17.

15 28. A process of Claim 24 wherein the dosage units applied
 are as defined in Claim 21.

20 29. A process of Claim 24 wherein the dosage units applied
 are as defined in Claim 22.

25 30. A fertility-control system comprising one or more
 series of three transdermal absorption dosage units as
 defined in Claim 1, each dosage unit of which provides
 at least minimum effective daily dosage amounts of
 estrogen and progestin for about one week, said dosage
 units to be applied serially for about one week each,
 the first dosage unit to be applied about on the fifth
 day of the menstrual cycle, the second and third dosage
 units to be applied about 7 and about 14 days later,
 respectively, said application of said series of three
 transdermal absorption units to be repeated as desired
 to control fertility.

35 40 45 50 55 31. A fertility control system of Claim 30 in which trans-
 dermal dosage units as defined in Claim 2 are applied.

 32. A fertility control system of Claim 30 in which trans-
 dermal dosage units as defined in Claim 13 are applied.

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33. A fertility control system of Claim 30 in which trans-
dermal dosage units as defined in Claim 17 are applied.

10

34. A fertility control system of Claim 30 in which trans-
dermal dosage units as defined in Claim 21 are applied.

15

35. A fertility control system of Claim 30 in which trans-
dermal dosage units as defined in Claim 22 are applied.

20

36. A fertility control system comprising one or more
series of three transdermal dosage units, each dosage
unit providing at least minimum effective daily dosage
amounts of estrogen and progestin for about one week,
said dosage units to be applied serially for about one
week each, the first dosage unit to be applied about on
the fifth day of the menstrual cycle, the second and
third dosage units to be applied about 7 and 14 days
thereafter, respectively; said dosage units comprising:

25

a) a backing layer which is substantially impervious
to the estrogen and progestin hormones to be
delivered transdermally;

30

b) a polymer layer which is adhered to said backing
layer and which has dissolved and/or microdis-
persed therein an effective dosage amount of one
or more effective estrogens absorbable transder-
mally and are pharmaceutically acceptable, said

35

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5 polymer being bioacceptable, providing a compatible environment for said one or more estrogens and permitting said one or more estrogens to be transmitted for transdermal absorption,

10 15 c) an adhesive layer having dissolved and/or micro-dispersed therein an effective dosage amount of one or more effective progestins, which are absorbable transdermally and are pharmaceutically acceptable, said adhesive layer being bioacceptable, providing a compatible environment for said one or more progestins, and permitting said one or more progestins and said one or more estrogens to be transmitted for transdermal absorption, said adhesive layer having an effective amount of transdermal skin absorption enhancing agent; and

20 25 30 35 d) a separating layer made of a bioacceptable adhesive or polymer located between said polymer and adhesive layers and in intimate contact therewith through which said one or more estrogens are transmitted for desired transdermal absorption, said separating layer made using an adhesive or polymer which is free or substantially free of estrogen, progestin and enhancing agents; said hormones being stable in said polymer and adhesive layers and being transdermally absorbed simultaneously to provide at least minimum effective daily doses of said hormones to effect fertility

40 45 50 55

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control or estrogen replacement therapy; said dosage units further characterized as follows:

10

a) first dosage unit having a progestin/estrogen transdermal absorption rate ratio from about 0.75/1 to about 1.27/1 based upon the progestin being levonorgestrel or levonorgestrel bioequivalent amount transdermally absorbed of another progestin used as said progestin and further based upon the estrogen being 17-beta-estradiol or 17-beta-estradiol bioequivalent amount transdermally absorbed of another estrogen used as said estrogen:

20

b) second dosage unit having a progestin/estrogen transdermal absorption rate ratio from about 1.25/1 to about 2.5/1 based upon the progestin being levonorgestrel or levonorgestrel bioequivalent amount transdermally absorbed of another progestin used as said progestin and further based upon the estrogen being 17-beta-estradiol or a 17-beta-estradiol bioequivalent amount transdermally absorbed of another estrogen used as said progestin; and

30

c) third dosage unit having a progestin/estrogen transdermal absorption rate ratio from about 2/1 to about 5/1 based upon the progestin

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5 being levonorgestrel or levonorgestrel bio-
equivalent amount transdermally absorbed of
10 another progestin used as said progestin and
further based upon the estrogen being 17-
beta-estradiol or a 17-beta-estradiol bio-
15 equivalent amount transdermally absorbed of
another estrogen used as said progestin.

20 37. A fertility control system of Claim 36 wherein the
 progesterin is levonorgestrel and the estrogen is 17-
25 beta-estradiol.

38. A process of estrogen replacement therapy by applying
30 successively to the skin of a subject needing said
therapy, dosage units as described in Claim 1 which
35 provide effective dosages respectively of one or more
estrogens and one or more progestins for said replace-
ment therapy.

40

45

50

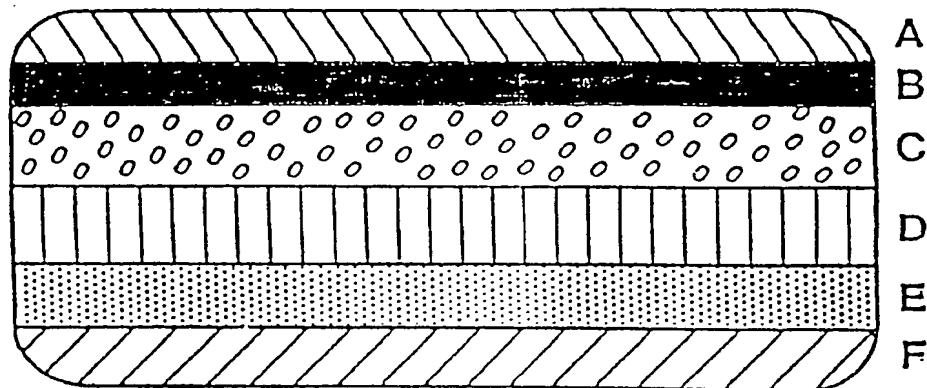
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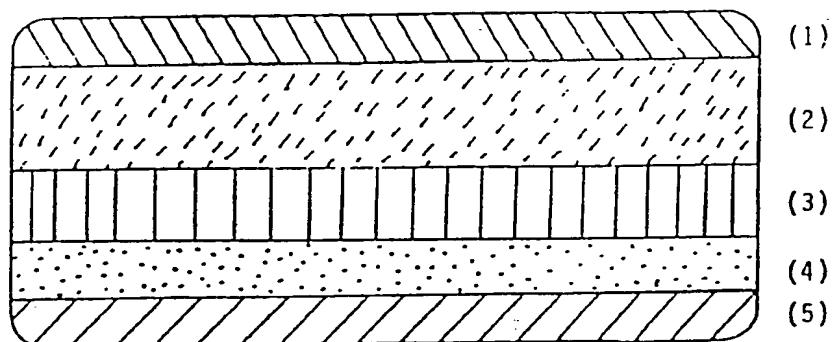
FIG. 1

Multicompartment-type
Transdermal Drug Delivery System
(m-TDD System)

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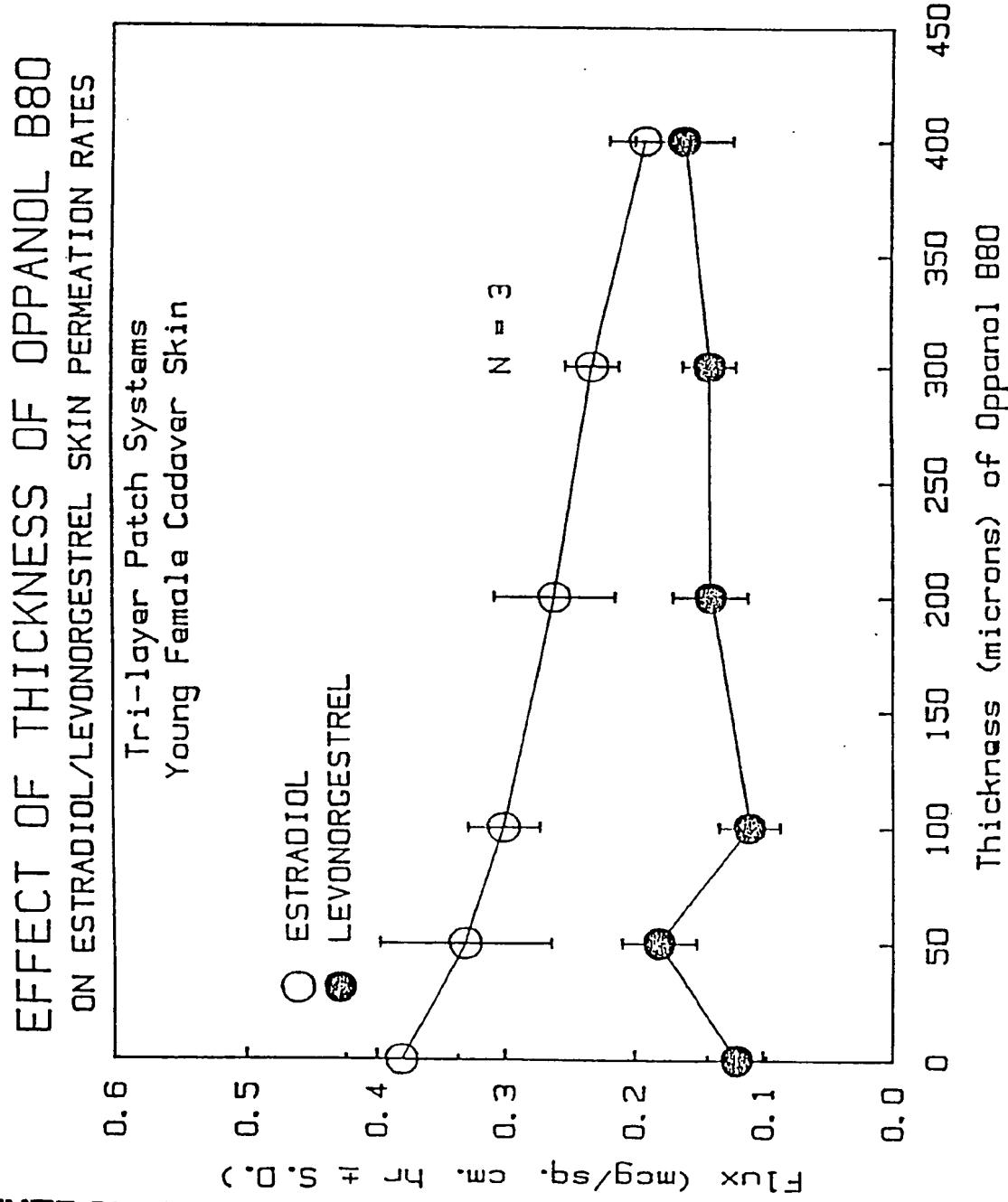
FIG. 2



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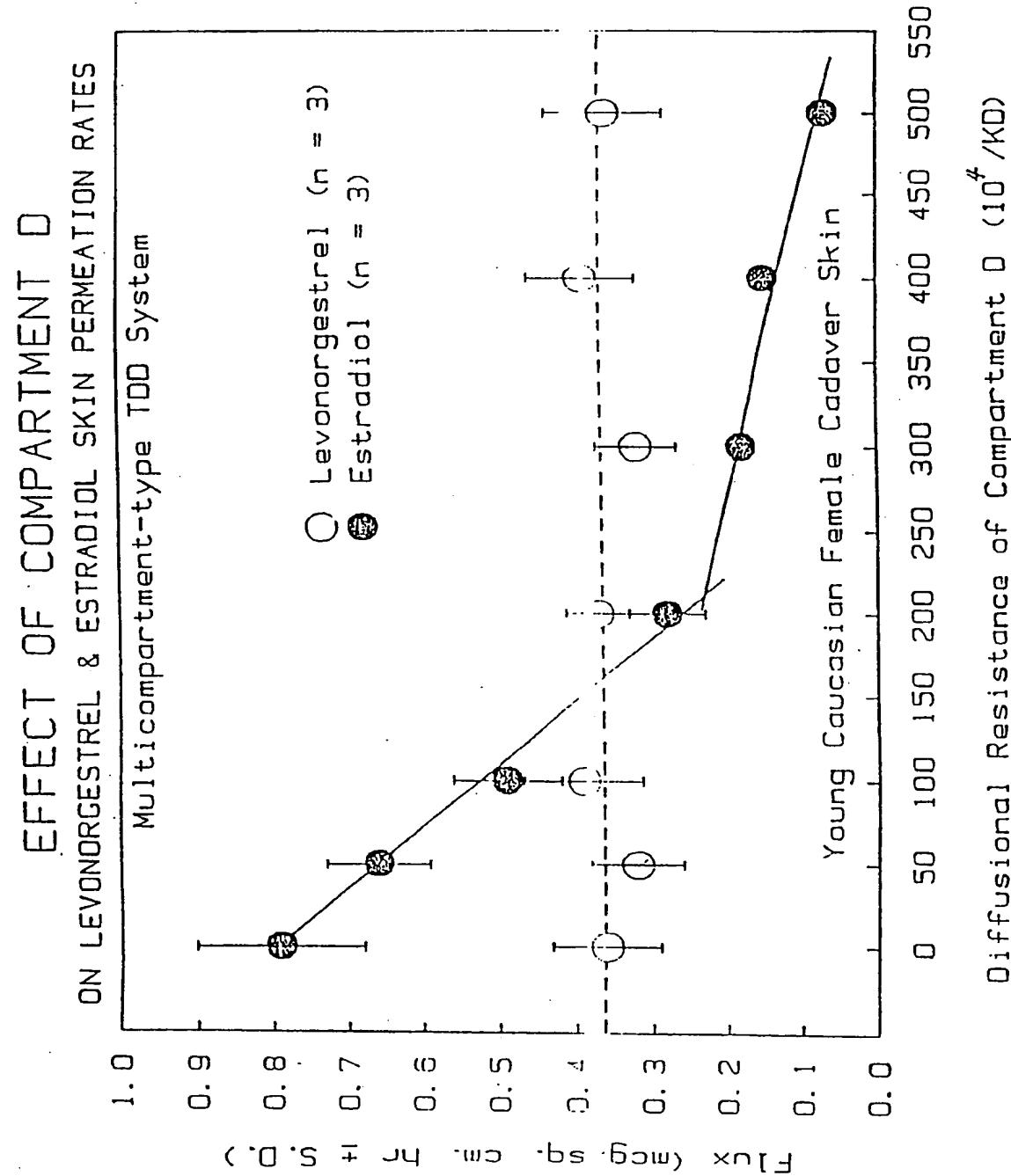
3/19

FIG. 3

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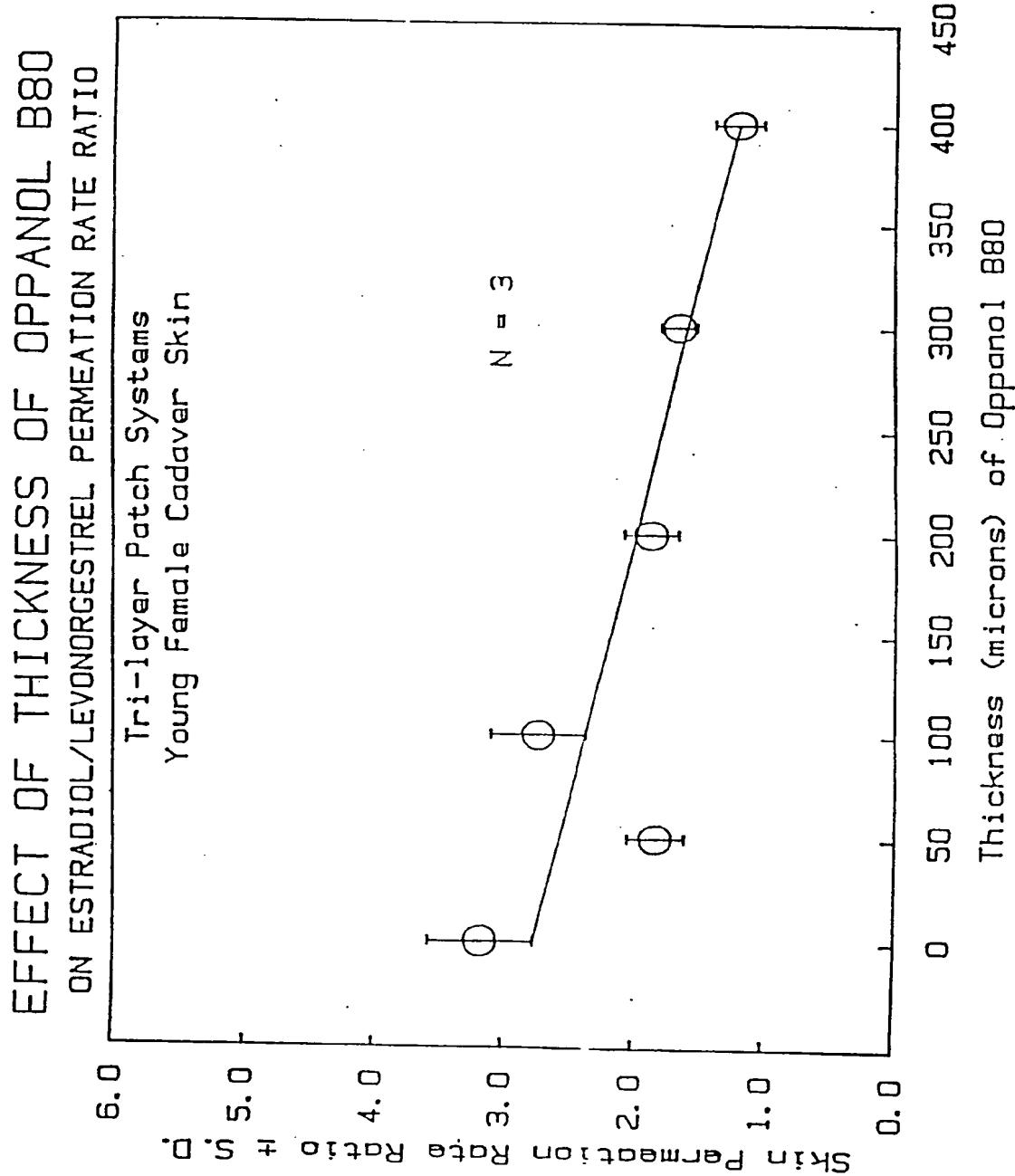
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FIG. 4

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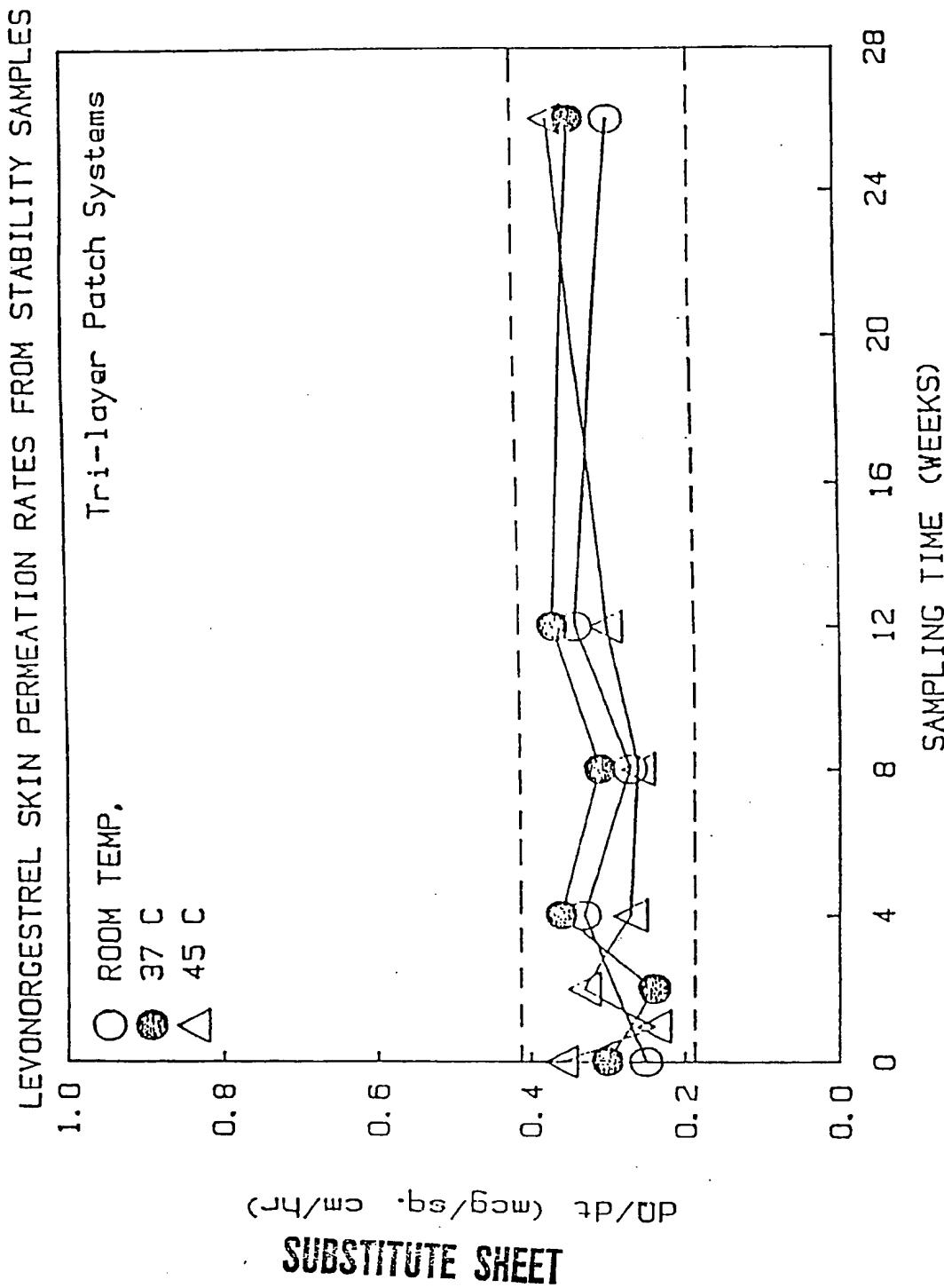
FIG. 5



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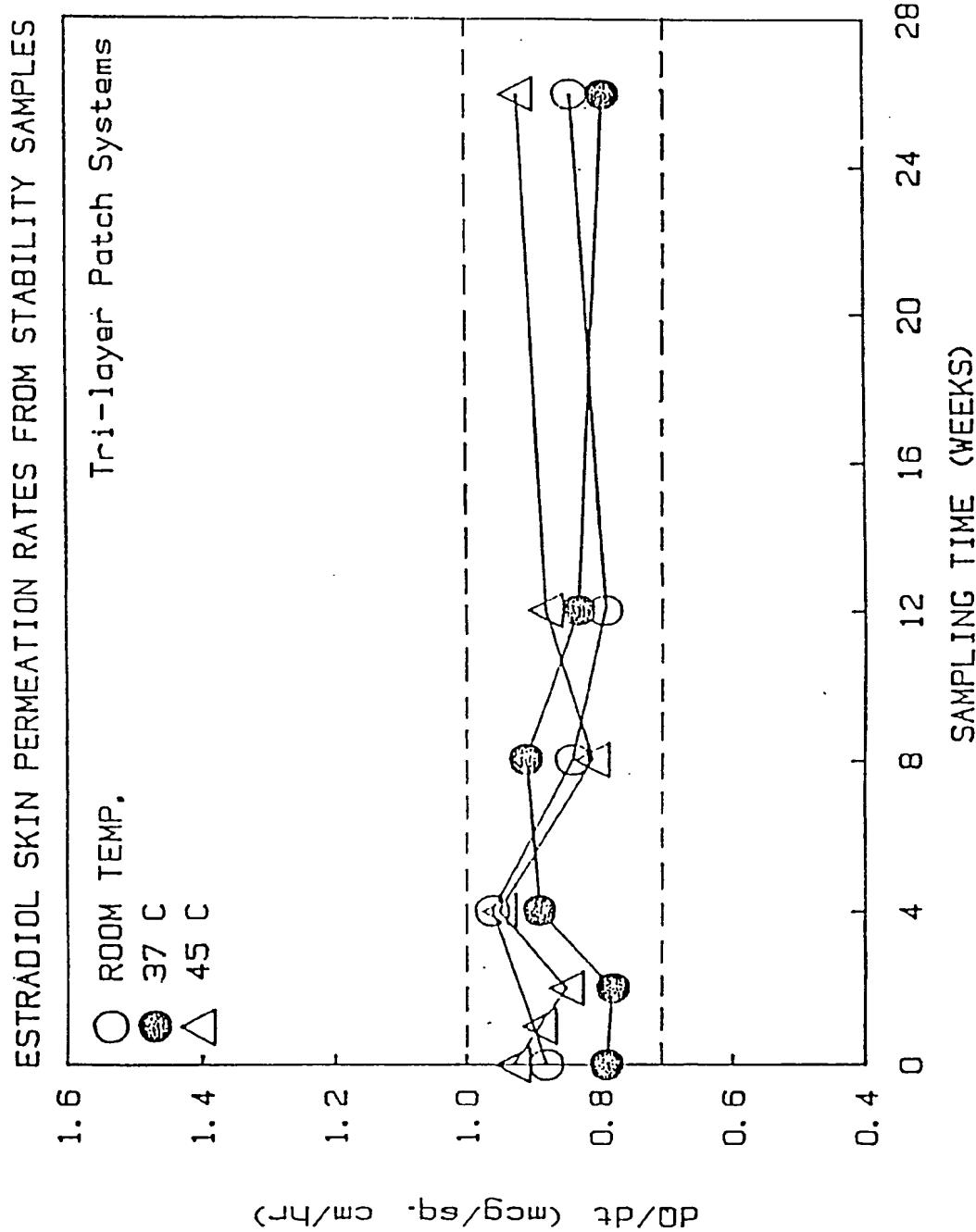
6/19

FIG. 6



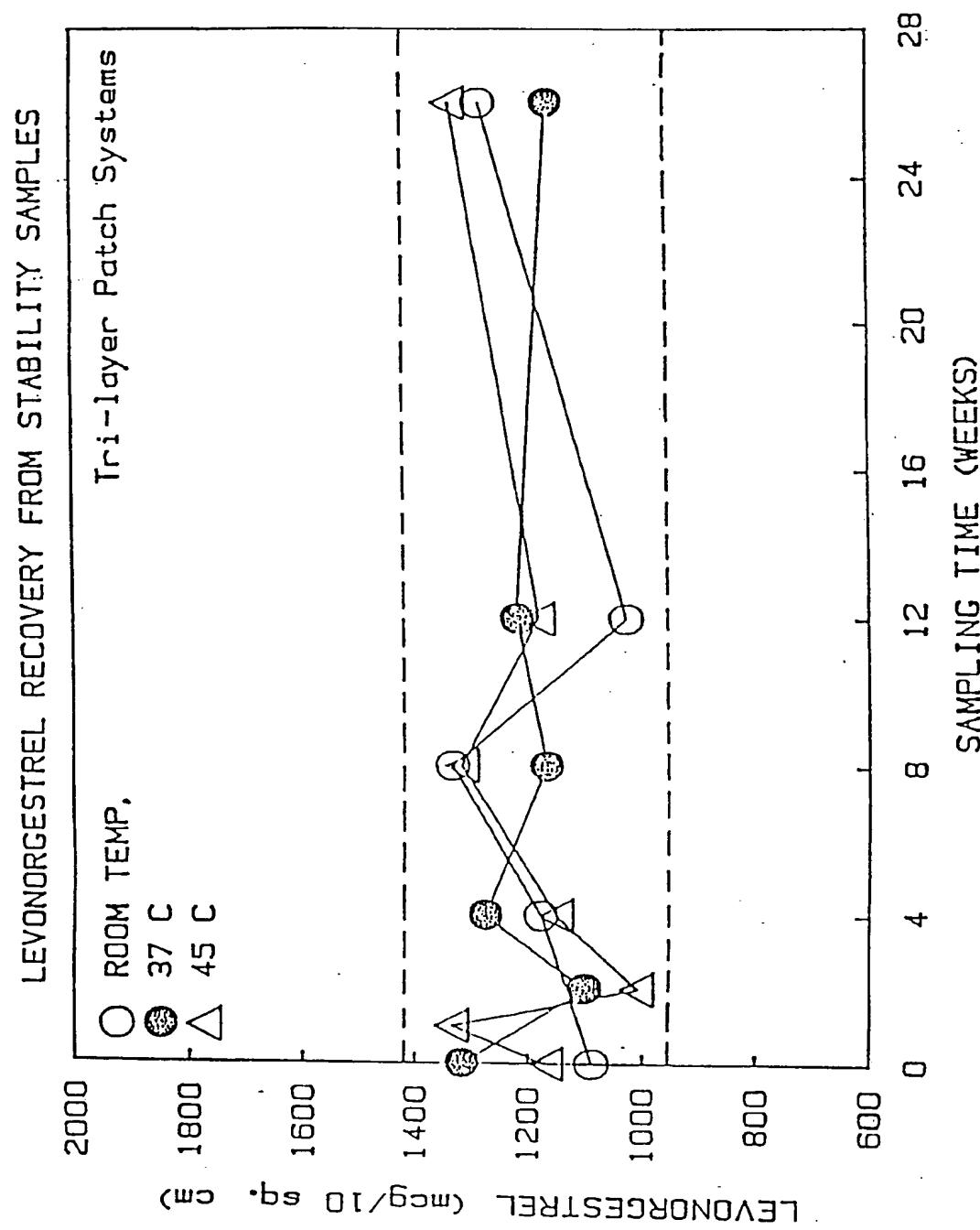
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FIG. 7

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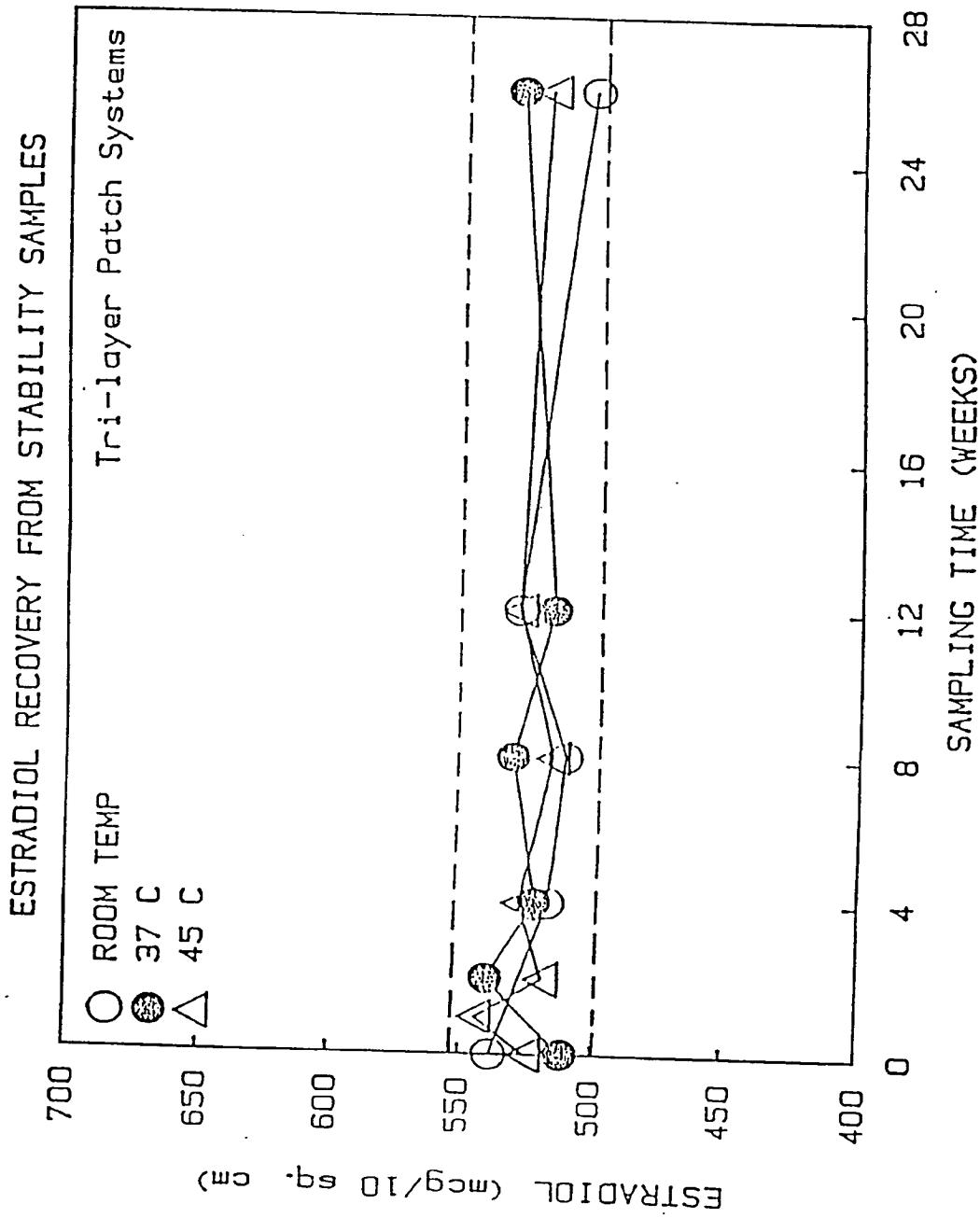
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FIG. 8

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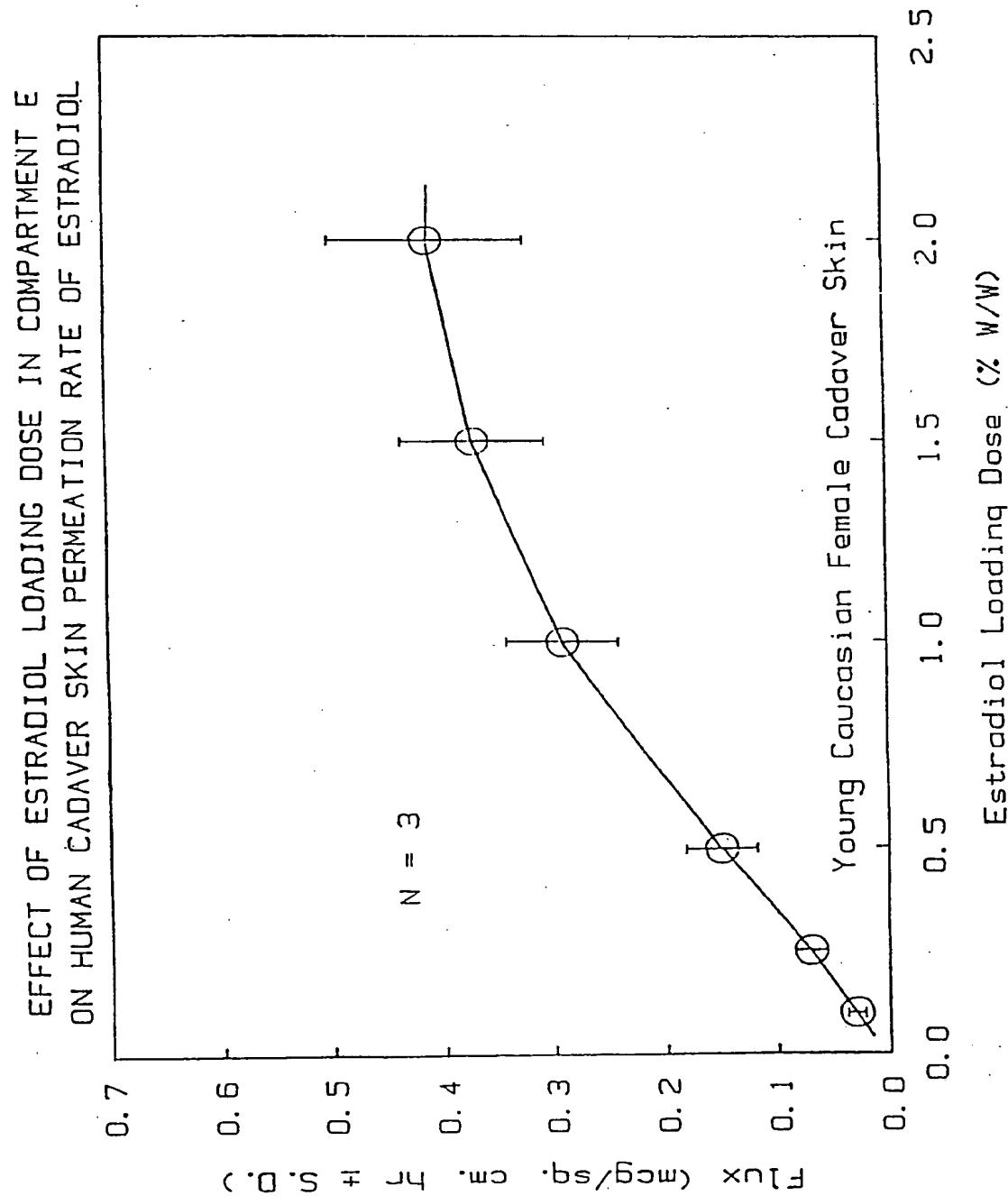
FIG. 9



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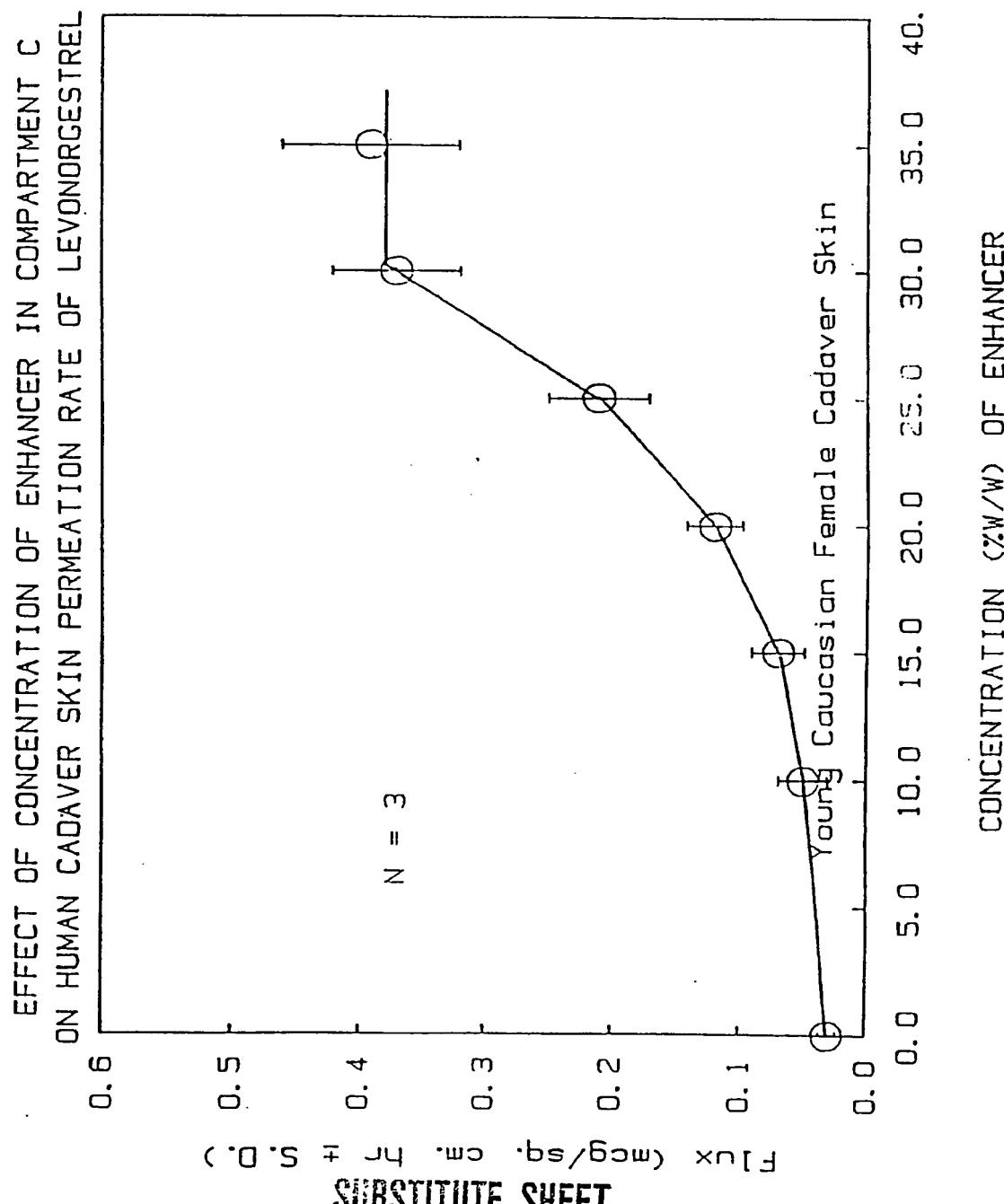
FIG. 10



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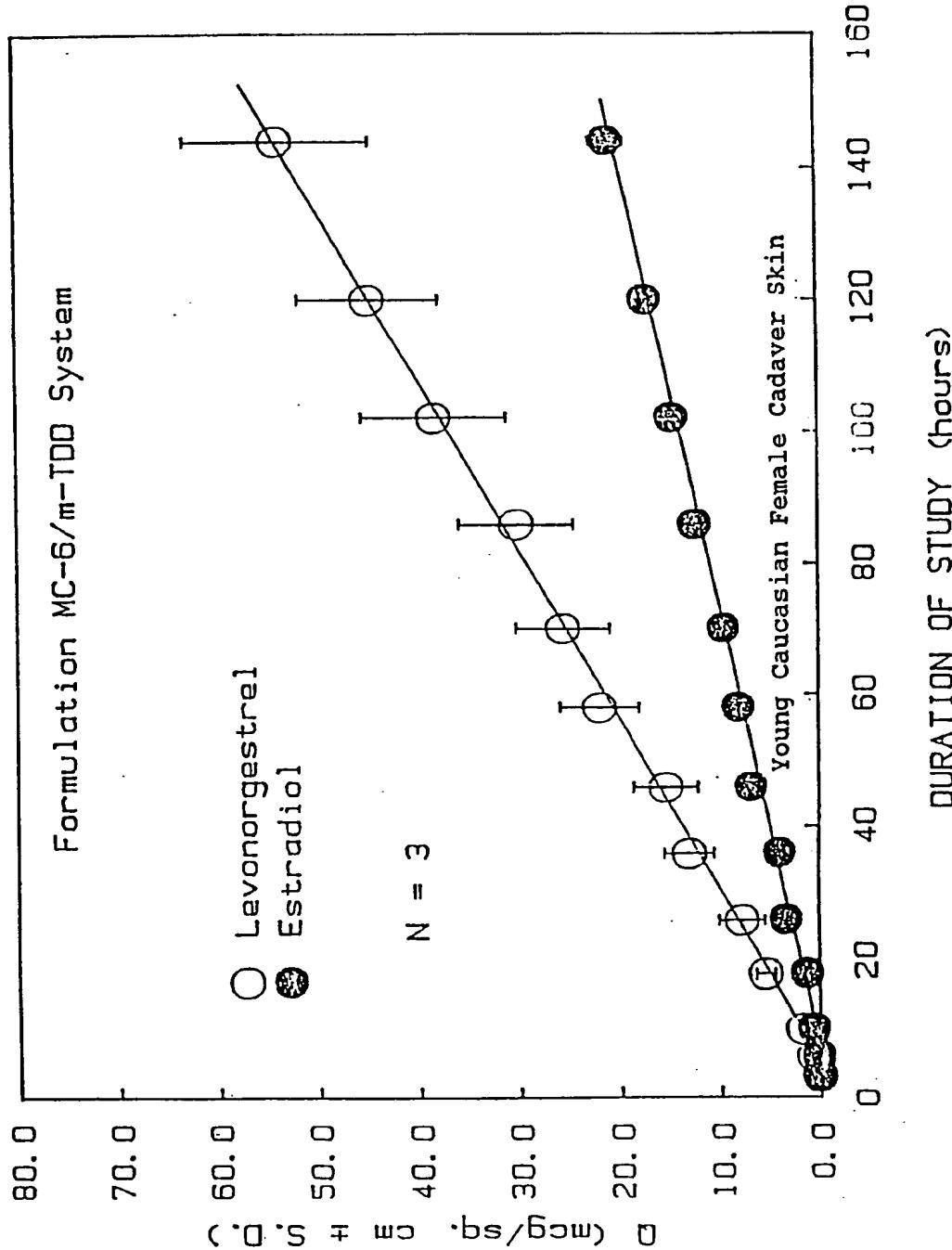
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FIG. 11



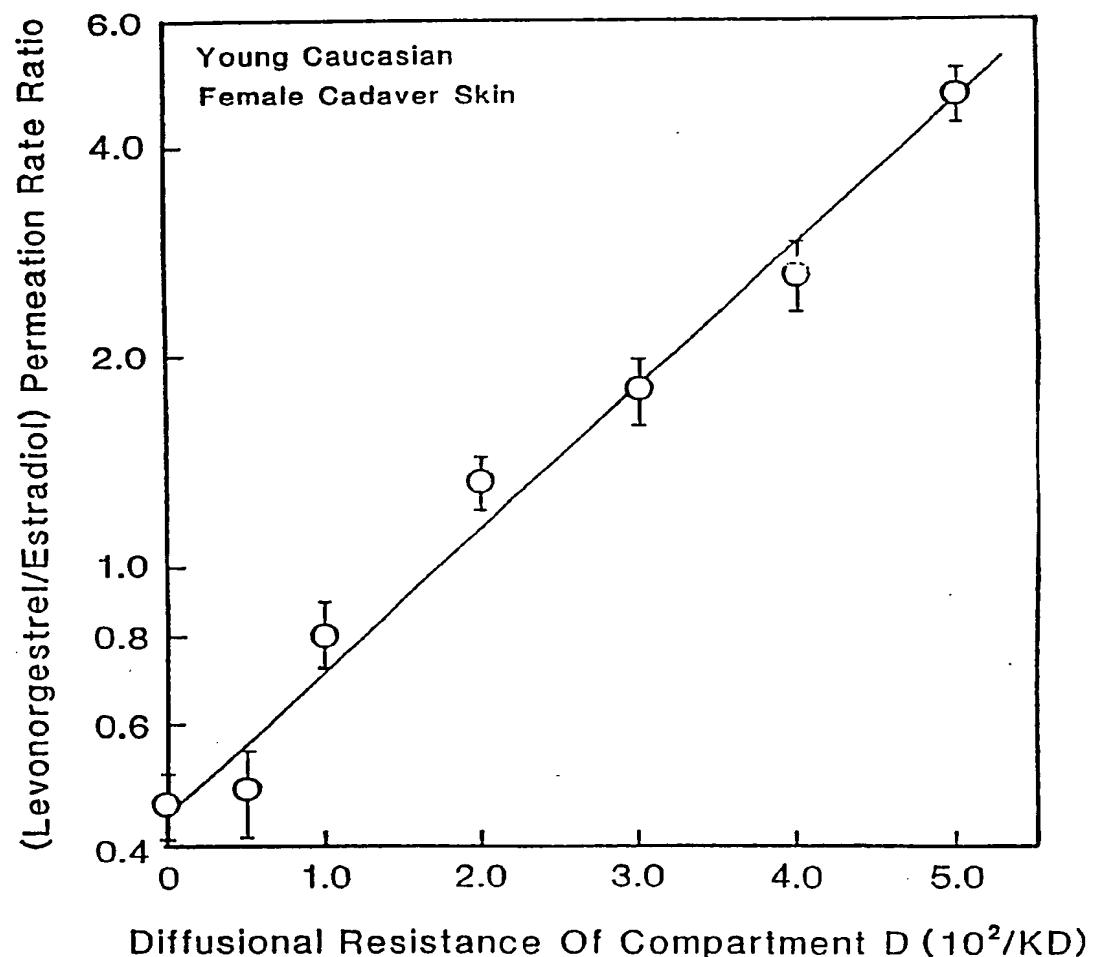
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FIG. 12

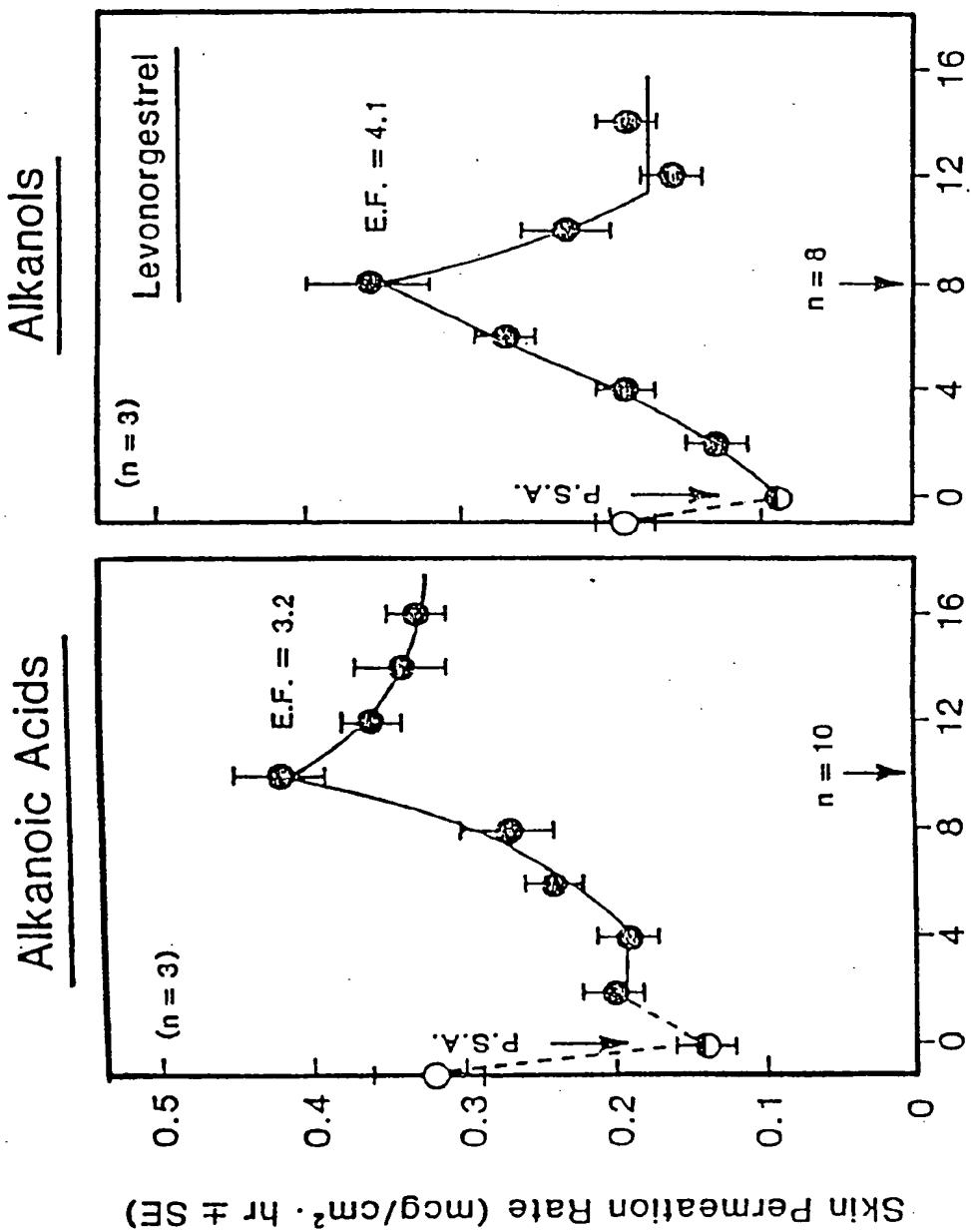
SKIN PERMEATION PROFILES OF
LEVONORGESTREL AND ESTRADIOL**SUBSTITUTE SHEET**

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FIG. 13

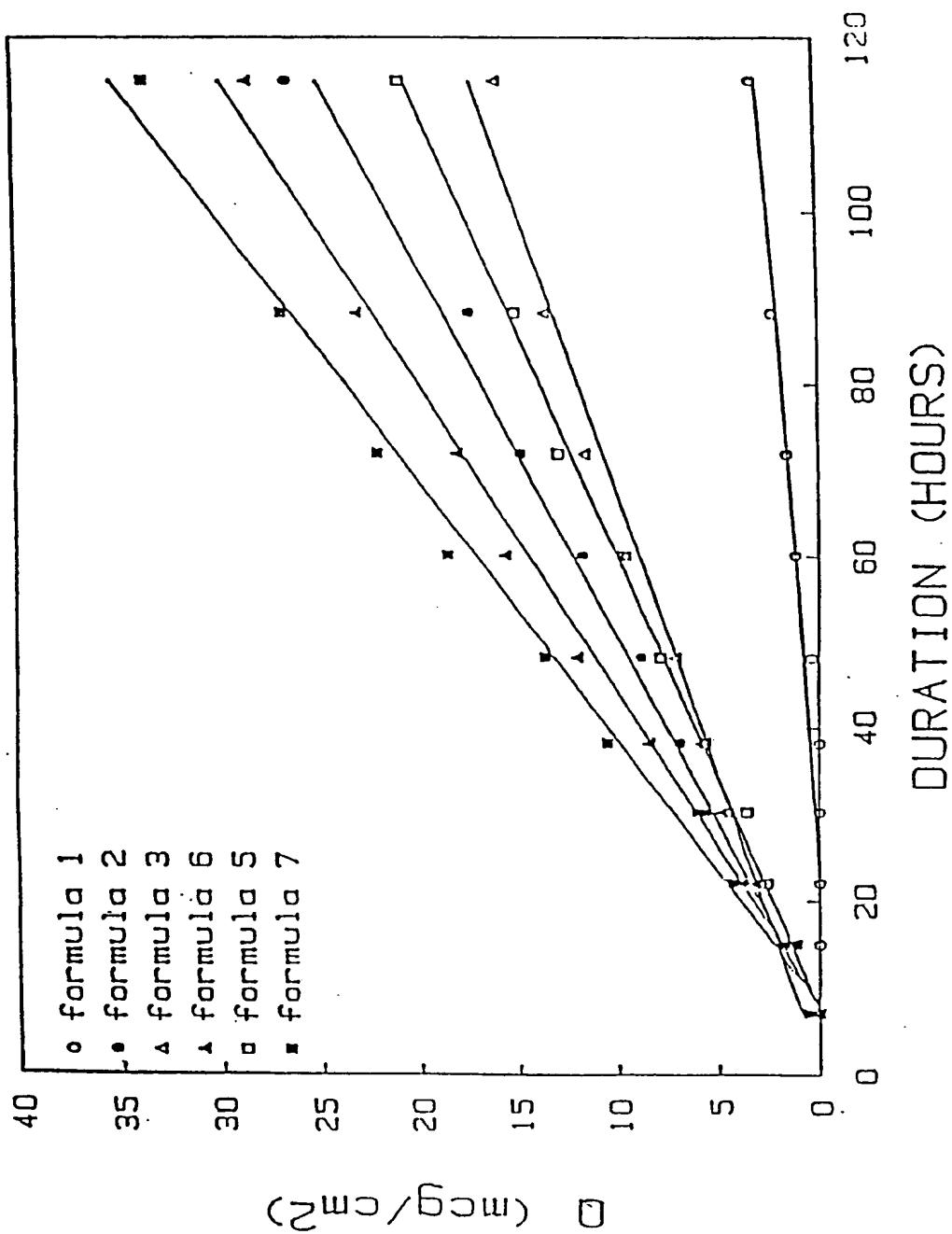
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FIG. 14A
FIG. 14B**SUBSTITUTE SHEET**

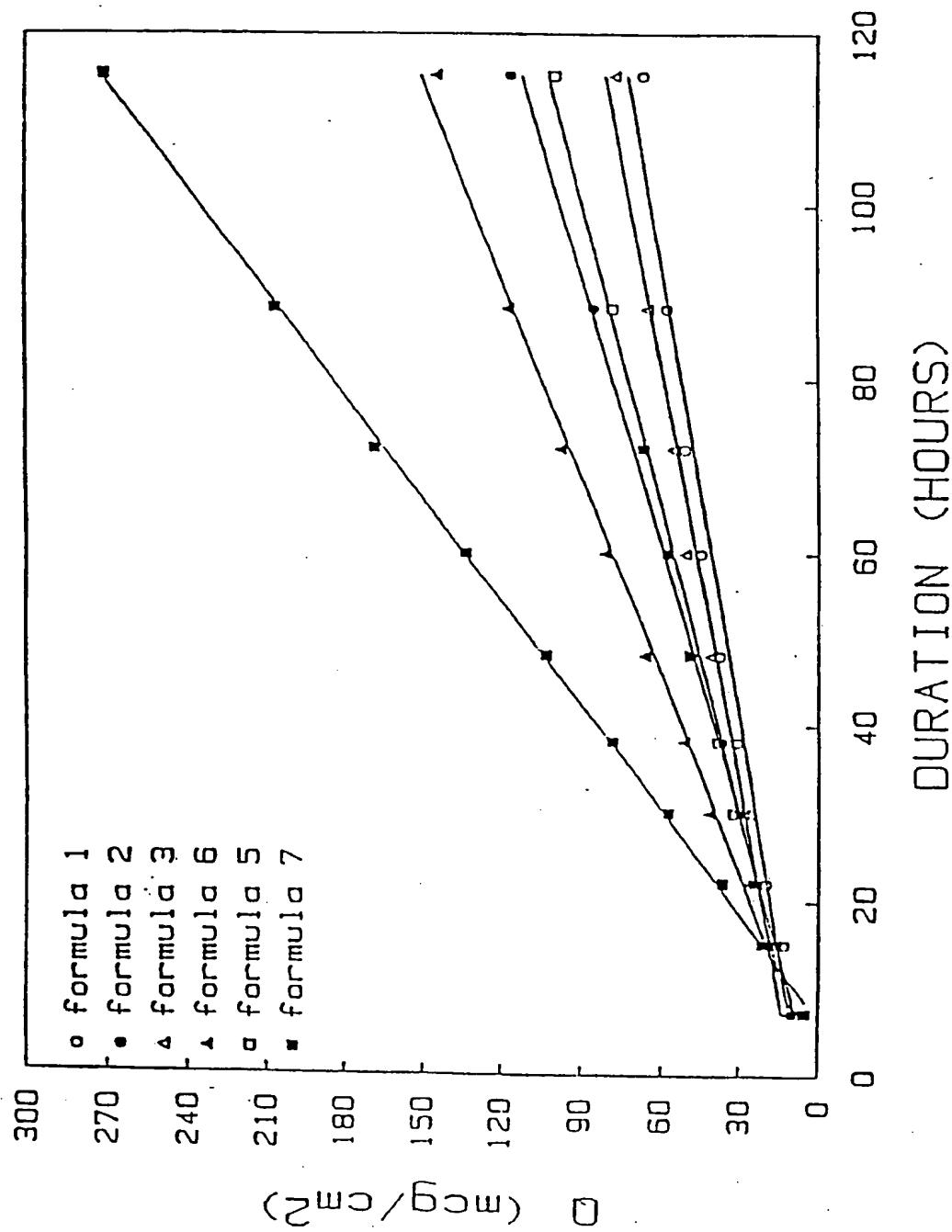
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FIG. 15

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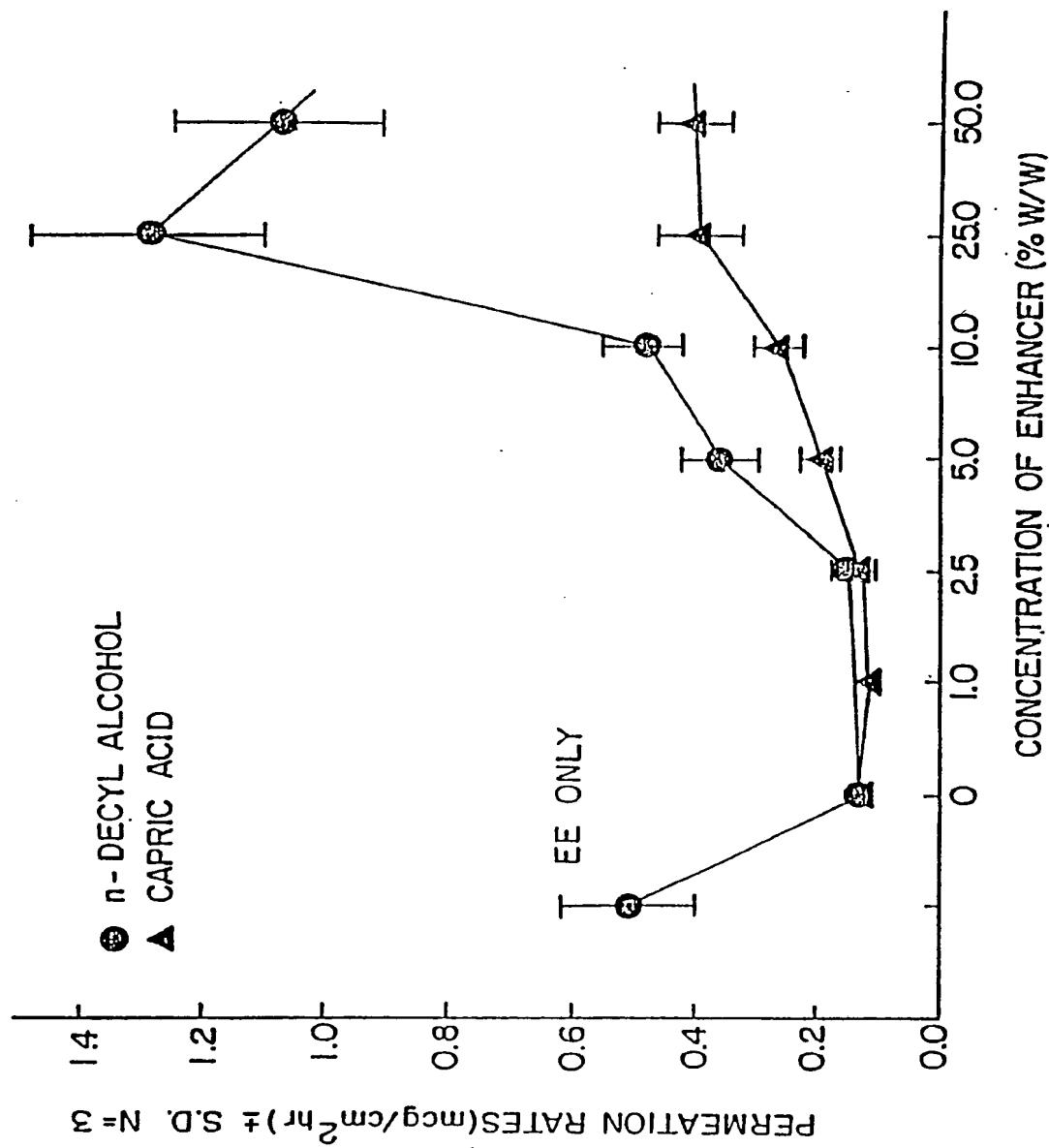
FIG. 16



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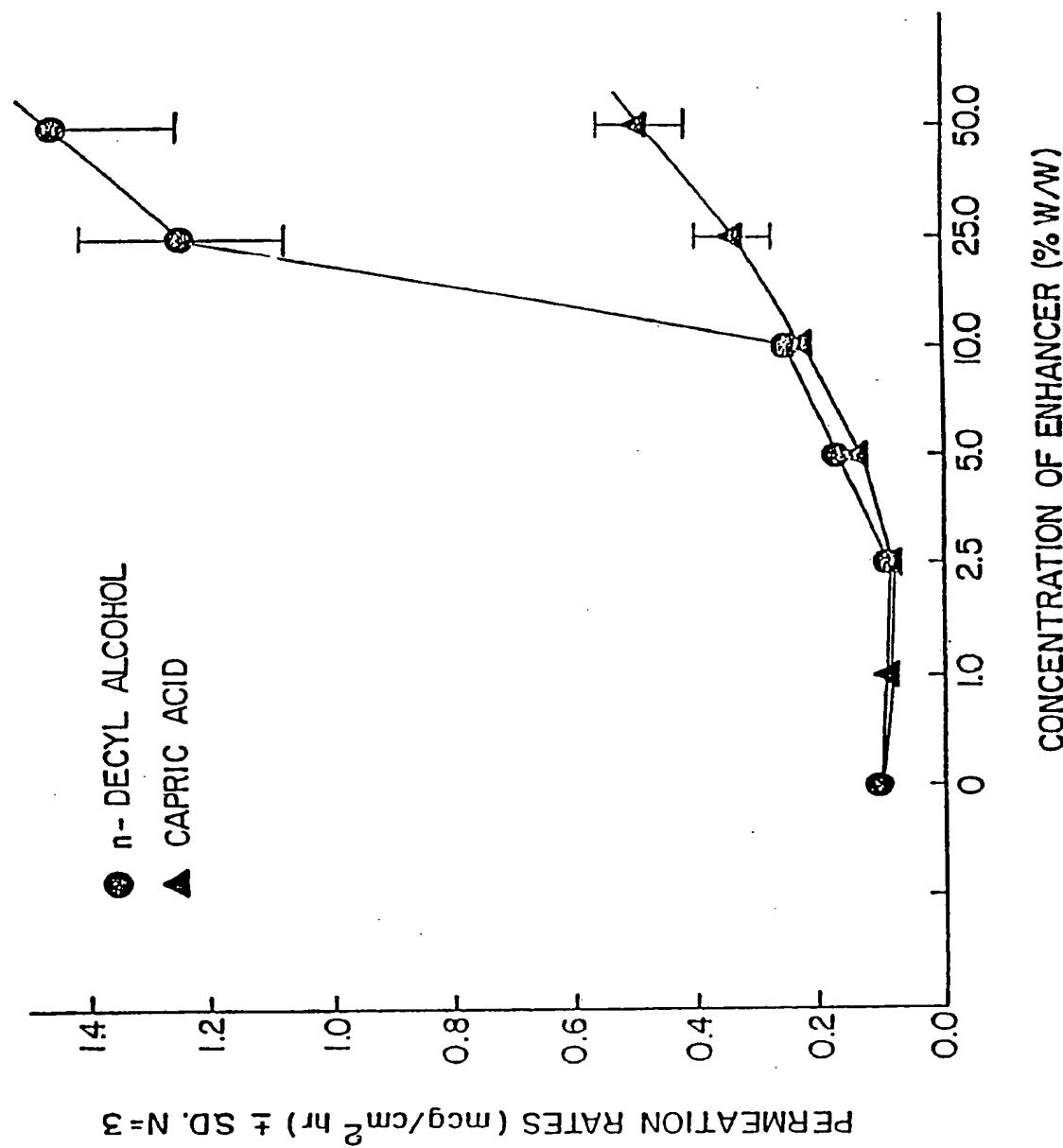
FIG. 17



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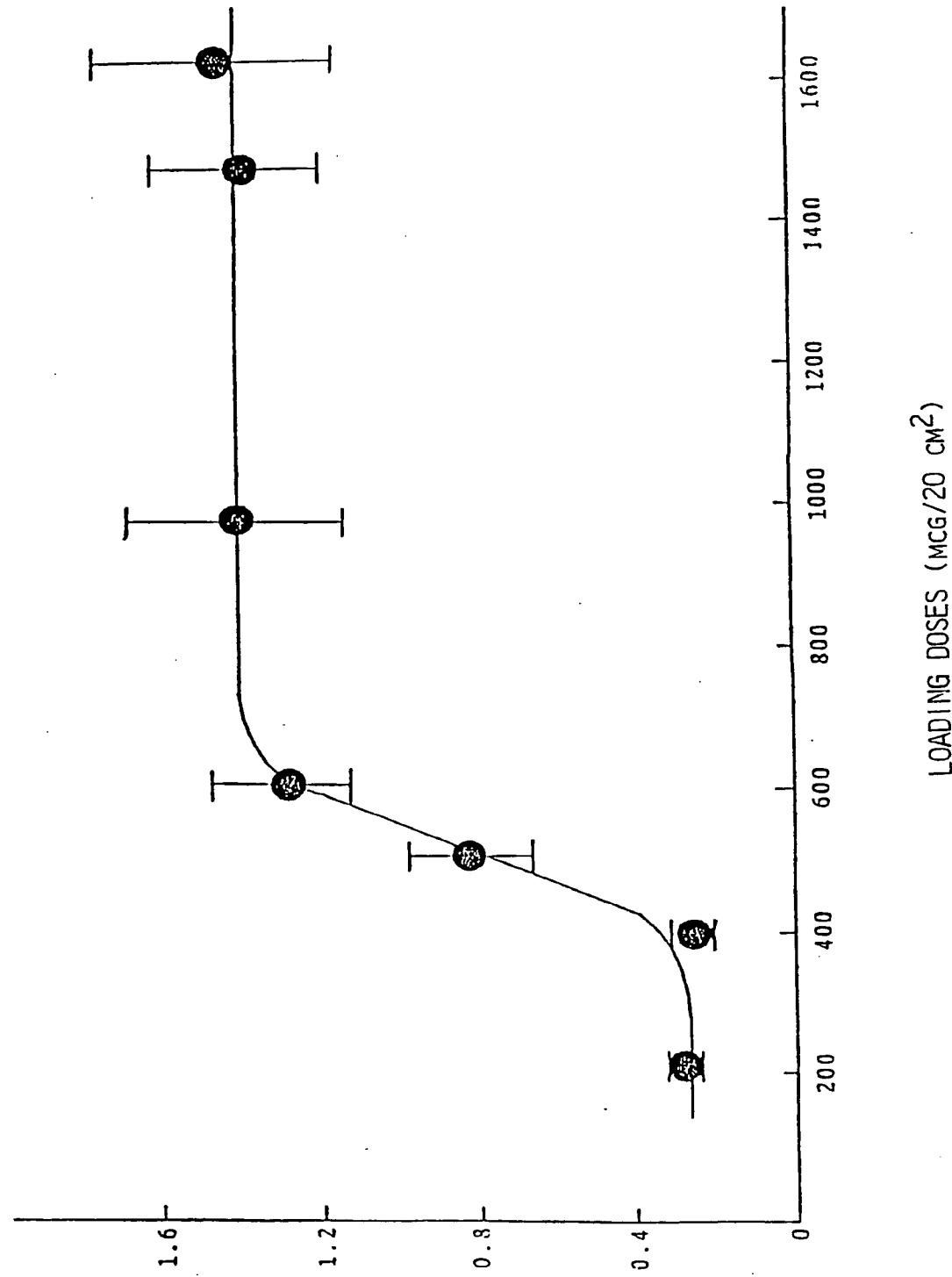
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FIG. 18

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FIG. 19

PERMEATION RATE (MCG/CM² HR + S.D.) N = 3

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No.

PCT/US89/05783

I. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER (if several classification symbols apply, indicate all) ⁶

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC
IPC(5) A61F 13/02
US. CL. 424/448

II. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum Documentation Searched ⁷

Classification System	Classification Symbols
U.S.	424/448, 449

Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation
to the Extent that such Documents are Included in the Fields Searched ⁸

III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT ⁹

Category ¹⁰	Citation of Document, ¹¹ with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages ¹²	Relevant to Claim No. ¹³
P,X	US, A 4,818,540 (CHIEN ET AL.) 04 APRIL 1989	1-38

* Special categories of cited documents: ¹⁰
" A" document defining the general state of the art which is not
considered to be of particular relevance
" E" earlier document but published on or after the international
filing date
" L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or
which is cited to establish the publication date of another
citation or other special reason (as specified)
" O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or
other means
" P" document published prior to the international filing date but
later than the priority date claimed

" T" later document published after the international filing date
or priority date and not in conflict with the application but
cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the
invention
" X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention
cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to
involve an inventive step
" Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention
cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the
document is combined with one or more other such docu-
ments, such combination being obvious to a person skilled
in the art.
" &" document member of the same patent family

IV. CERTIFICATION

Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search

13 FEBRUARY 1990

Date of Mailing of this International Search Report

05 MAR 1990

International Searching Authority

ISA/US

Signature of Authorized Officer

LEON R. HORNE

Leon R. Horne

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